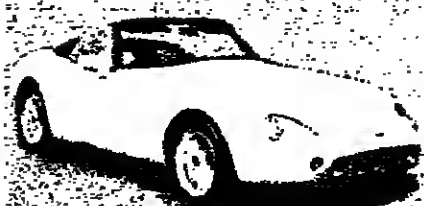




**FAT IS NOT A FEMINIST ISSUE**  
If you should worry about your weight, page 14



**How to use the education league tables - Section Two**



See Section Two for more, page 13



Victims: (from left) Juanita Mott, Lucy Partington, Charmaine West, Carol Ann Cooper, Shirley Ann Robinson, Therese Siegenthaler, Heather West, Lynda Carol Gough, Shirley Hubbard and Alison Jane Chambers

## How many more did they kill?

Ten life sentences for Rosemary West as police name other possible victims

WILL BENNETT

Rosemary West was sentenced to spend the rest of her life in jail after the jury at Winchester Crown Court decided yesterday that she was guilty of 10 murders, including the killing of her daughter and stepdaughter.

But Rosemary and Frederick West's murderous tally does not end there.

Frederick West probably killed more than 30 women, sometimes alone but often in a deadly partnership with his wife. Together they were Britain's biggest serial killers.

As soon as the sentences were handed down by Mr Justice Mantell, there were immediate calls for an inquiry into how the pair could have operated under the noses of the authorities for so long. It is believed that West was visited by police and social service officers on around 60 separate occasions.

Gloucestershire Police defended their record. "Hindsight is a wonderful thing," said Detective Superintendent John Bennett, who led the West murder inquiry.

The trial ended dramatically, with a shout of "hooray" from the public gallery, as the seven remaining verdicts were announced by the male jury foreman yesterday. Rosemary West, aged 41, had been found guilty of three murders on Tuesday.

She showed no emotion as the judge told her: "On each of the ten counts of murder on which you have been unanimously convicted by the jury, the

sentence is one of life imprisonment."

"If attention is paid to what I think, you will never be released," he said before telling prison warders: "Take her down." She will serve her sentence in the women's wing of Durham maximum security jail, which also houses Myra Hindley.

Throughout the 31-day trial, she had denied murdering the ten girls and young women whose remains were found at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, and at the Wests' previous home in the city.

The prosecution alleged that she had been involved "up to her neck" with her husband in the killings. Seven of the victims had been stripped, tied up, gagged and kept alive for days while they were sexually abused.

But she said she knew nothing about the murders, which she blamed on her husband. Frederick West confessed to 11 of the 12 murders with which he was charged. He committed suicide in his cell at Winslow Prison, Birmingham, on New Year's Day.

On Tuesday, the jury of seven men and four women convicted Rosemary West of murdering her eldest daughter, Heather, her stepdaughter, Charmaine West, and Shirley Robinson, a lodger who was pregnant by her husband.

Yesterday, after more than 12 hours of deliberation and having spent two nights in a hotel, the jury convicted her of murdering Lynda Gough, Carol Cooper, Lucy Partington, Therese Siegenthaler, Shirley Hubbard, Juanita Mott and Alison Chambers. They all met a terrifying end as sexual slaves in the Cromwell Street cellar.

Convictions on the seven murder counts given yesterday had depended entirely on the discovery of the remains at Cromwell Street and "similar fact" evidence that the Wests had used gags and bindings in sexual assaults on three women who survived.

The jury returned at 12.25pm yesterday to ask the judge whether the absence of direct evidence against Rosemary West was an obstacle to guilty verdicts. He told them it that need not be, provided that they drew the same inferences from the evidence as had the prosecution.

At 12.52pm they returned with seven unanimous guilty verdicts. In the public gallery Anne-Marie Davis, Rosemary West's stepdaughter, who was sexually abused by both the Wests, clasped her hands together in prayer. Afterwards Leo Goutley, Rosemary West's solicitor, said: "My client is totally devastated. She wept uncontrollably after hearing the

verdicts of the jury. She continues to maintain her innocence and retains the love and support of her children."

Mr Goutley said that she would still fight the verdicts and that: "We are actively pursuing an appeal on her behalf."

He condemned the media for approaching witnesses for their stories. "Freedom of expression and the right of the public to know does not include the intrusive press activity that has blighted these proceedings."

Joan Owen, mother of Alison Chambers, whose remains were found under the patio at Cromwell Street, said: "I am grateful that everyone in the country and the world knows exactly what those people did."

Kathryn Halliday, a key witness in the trial, who had described how she had an increasingly violent lesbian relationship with Rosemary West, said: "She is an evil woman. She should never come out."

Gloucestershire Police defended their record even though they failed to connect a sexual assault by the Wests on Carmine Owens in 1973 with the disappearance of Lynda Gough a few months later. The force, which spent £1.7m on the case, was commended by the judge for its "meticulous" inquiries.

A report by The Bridge, an independent child care consultancy, highlighted mistakes made by health and social services. It also criticised the NSPCC for losing a crucial file. The NSPCC said that it "bitterly regretted" not having taken the case referred to it more seriously.

### The missing women of Cromwell Street

...a white woman in her early 20s in 1991. Had long blonde hair and may have been a student.

Donna Lynn Moore (or similar), described as white, 13 or 14-year-old. The slim spoke with an American accent and may be the daughter of a US serviceman from East Germany.

Name not known, but police issued photograph of full-faced brunet, with rosy lips, thought to have been taken when she visited in 1975.

Maria Ann, a white woman in her early 20s in 1991. Had long blonde hair and may have been a student.

Mireeker or Marieka (or similar), a white woman in her late 20s in 1977-78, possibly from Holland.

Name not known, a white woman aged between 18 and 20 in 1978.

May have been called Ingrid, a white woman aged around 18 in 1978-79, possibly of German origin.

Name not known, a white woman with long blonde hair, aged 17-20 in 1973.

Name not known, a white woman with blonde hair and a Swedish or Dutch accent.

Names of the girls and women who passed through the Wests' home and have yet to be accounted for

## Call for inquiry into social services



Police taking hold of evidence from 25 Cromwell Street at the start of the inquiry. Photograph: Dylan Martinez

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES AND COLIN BROWN

A public inquiry should be held into the repeated failure of local agencies to uncover the nightmare at the West home in Gloucester, Douglas French, MP for the city, said last night.

The MP said the failures "trouble me very deeply. It is at the very heart of the matter. A personal distress hotline to ensure future abusers were never allowed again to practise evil with such impunity should be established, he said.

"The total amount of information spread among the different agencies - social services, police, health and education - would have been sufficient to set the alarm bells ringing. The problem was that no single agency had all the information."

Mr French said a key lesson from the tragic events was that incoming information must be collated at one point. "There could be an equivalent to the 999 call - a personal distress hotline, say 666, that went across the country."

Had such a system been in operation, it was possible that some of the murders could have been avoided, the MP said.

The official report by the Bridge consultancy catalogued a series of failures, including a failure to share information, but said that no child protection system in Britain could have predicted the catalogue of murders. Mr French said his hotline suggestion, and a discussion about its practical implementation, should be raised in a public inquiry to bring together all the expert opinion

about the prevention of abuse.

The Government was, however, damping down expectations of any full-scale inquiry. A Government source said: "It's very hard to lay down guidelines to deal with sex-mad killers who are very good at covering their tracks." It was pointed out that the first case involving the Wests took place before the Maria Colwell inquiry, after which new procedures were put in place for the police to inform social services of suspected abusers.

But there was concern among MPs. Peter Temple-Morris, Tory MP for Leominster, said: "It needs to be examined now we have got this trial over with. The fact that such a large number of murders took place in the area, and that it was not discovered sooner, is a cause for concern. We will

need to learn any lessons from it."

Jack Straw, the shadow home secretary, said: "This was an appalling case almost beyond belief, and there will obviously need to be lessons to be learned about how so many people can go missing."

Peter Luff, Tory MP for Worcester, from where one of the victims came, said: "If mistakes have been made, procedures will have to be reviewed urgently. There should be no excuses for any failures."

But Sir Ivan Lawrence QC, Tory chairman of the cross-party home affairs select committee, said: "Social services always take a hammering when something goes wrong like this, but they also take a hammering when they do too much to interfere in the lives of individual families."

### IN BRIEF

#### Bosnia peace hurdle

The Bosnia peace plan hit its first obstacles yesterday as senior Bosnian Serbs denounced it as a "big mistake". General Ratko Mladic and Radovan Karadzic, meanwhile, kept silent in the face of war crimes allegations. Pages 18, 19

#### Turned off by politics

Britons are apathetic about politics, strongly punitive towards criminals, and want higher taxes for the rich, according to a new survey. Page 12

#### £2m-a-day delay

The Ministry of Defence was attacked by MPs for delays in a building project that cost the taxpayer £2m a week. Page 10

## Forte battles against Granada bid

MATTHEW HORSMAN AND JOHN SHEPHERD

Sir Rocco Forte, Britain's most famous hotelier, was last night desperately fighting off an unwanted bid from Granada, despite the prospect of personally gaining £80m from the deal.

In one of the largest hostile takeovers mounted in Britain, Granada is offering £3.1bn for Forte, the largest British hotel operator, whose flagship is the Grosvenor House in London's Park Lane. The Forte family stands to gain about £250m for its stake if the bid succeeds. Granada, best known as pro-

ducers of the hit television series *Cracker*, *Prime Suspect* and *Coronation Street*, said the Forte business was badly managed and could be turned around. Gerry Robinson, head of Granada, said some of the hotels would be sold, raising as much as £500m.

Forte went on the defensive, advising shareholders to reject the bid, which "totally fails to recognise the value of Forte". Sir Rocco, a workaholic and former playboy, attacked Mr Robinson's "audacious" move. "He knows nothing about this business. He's not saying anything new. There are huge profit im-

provements available to us."

Mr Robinson, who works at an easier pace, declaring most work to be "a waste of time", said his company was "financially and managerially ready" for the challenge of taking on the Forte properties. The company has a large rentals, television and catering business, but its hotels operations to date have been limited to sites on motorway services areas.

Insiders at Forte suggested Granada did not have the managerial ability to run an international hotels business. Recently the industry has been one of the most affected by the

recession, resulting in sharply lower hotel-room charges and strangled profits for the main operators.

Mr Robinson denied his team lacked the necessary managerial credentials and experience. "I didn't know anything about television, either, before I joined Granada," he said.

Granada runs Granada and the London Weekend Television franchises and has 27 service sites along main roads and motorways. It is also one of the two largest electronics rentals groups and is a BSkyB shareholder. Granada's own television interests have expanded

considerably in recent years, largely through the hostile takeover of LWT in 1993.

Analysts were expecting a higher offer from Granada in coming days, and said it might even have to pay as much as £3.9bn to succeed. They said a rival offer was unlikely.

The Forte dynasty, page 24

Victims battle, page 8



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## CROMWELL STREET MURDERS

# Hunt for the killers: Police chief defends force and says new links with social services mean that it cannot happen again

## Police failures led to 20 years of murder

JASON BENNETTO  
and WILL BENNETT

The police's failure to link a series of vital clues allowed Frederick and Rosemary West to continue their murdering spree for more than 20 years.

Gloucestershire Police force yesterday defended its actions despite being told that one of the Wests' visitors had disappeared in 1973 and having carried out several drug raids at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, during the same period.

Furthermore, West was well known to the police and is understood to have been interviewed by them on dozens of occasions before being arrested for murders. The police had also been aware of the Wests' taste for sexual violence since the early 1970s. Yet it took until last year before detectives finally stopped the killings that were carried out just a few minutes' walk from the main police station in Gloucester.

Following yesterday's verdict Tony Butler, the Chief Constable of Gloucestershire, argued that in the 1970s there were far fewer checks and co-operation between the social services and the police was limited. "In 1995 it would be different," he said.

The key events, which if followed up could have snared the Wests two decades ago, began in 1972, when Caroline Owens, the couple's former nanny, told police that she had been sexually assaulted by the Wests after they had kidnapped her while hitch-hiking. In January 1973, the couple pleaded guilty to assault and indecent assault and were each fined £50.

Frederick West raped her during the attack but police dissuaded Mrs Owens, then 17, from pressing this charge. Officers said that she would face a cross-examination and the court would hear that she had had sex with two lodgers at 25 Cromwell Street.

Mrs Owens said: "The police said 'you slept with so and so, you did this, you did that', it made me feel really ashamed of myself. The police treated me really badly. They put me off going to court as well. I decided to cover it all up."

Mr Butler, said because Mrs Owens knew the Wests and was not a child, so there was no need to inform the social services at the time. In line with Gloucestershire's policy the files from this case were later destroyed by the police and with them all details of the attack, which may have helped to link West with later incidents.

West was well known to the police at the time and was jailed a number of times, beginning in 1969 for non-payment of fines. The following year, he was imprisoned for nine

months for motor offences and theft.

Three months after the Owens court case came the second vital clue. Lynda Gough, 19, went missing from her Gloucester home. Her mother, June, made inquiries and discovered that she had been visiting the Wests. When she went to Cromwell Street a man and a woman told her she had left. The woman was wearing Lynda's slippers and some of her clothing was on the washing line. Mrs Gough contacted a friend who was a police officer and told of her concern. The officer later told detectives that a missing persons' notice was filed. However, nothing happened and no link was made with the earlier court case.

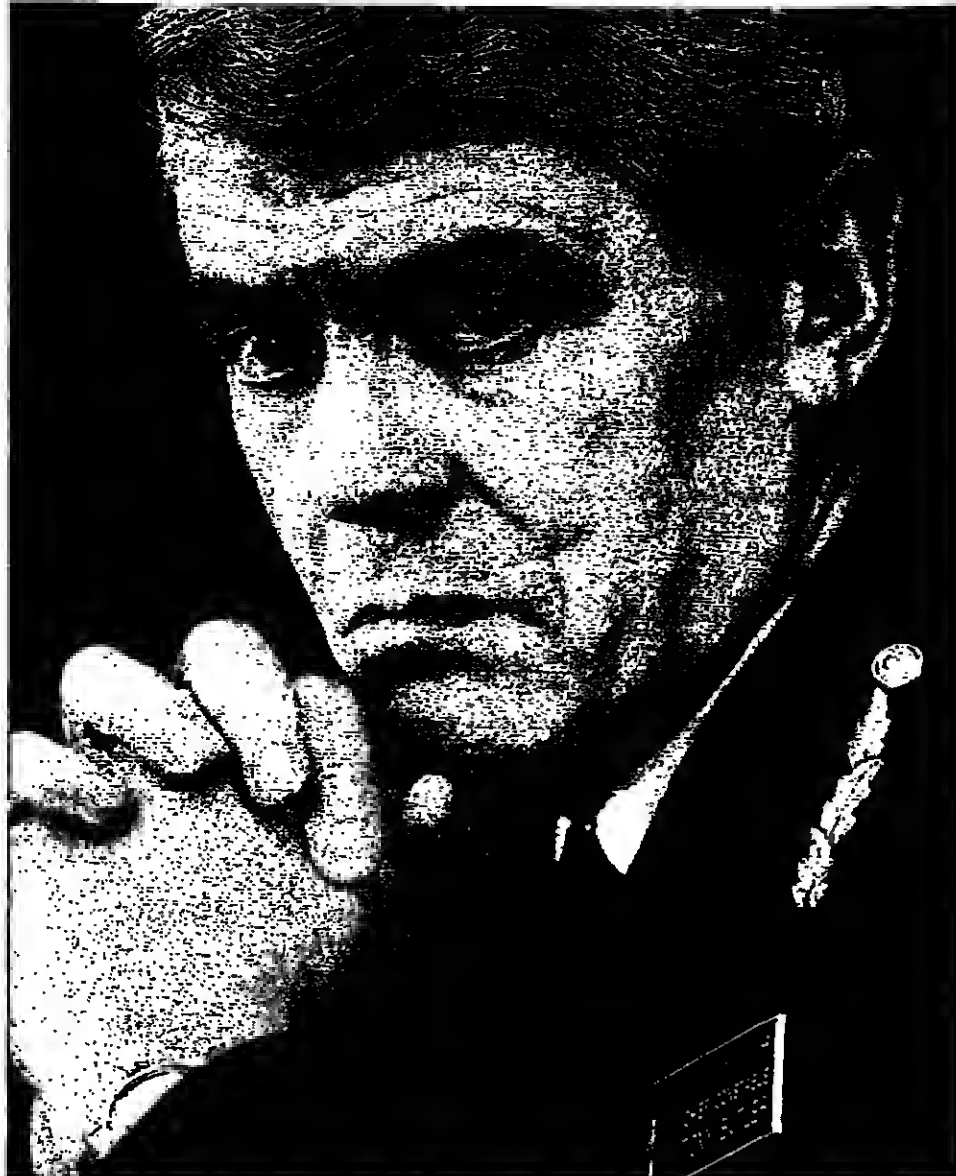
Gloucester police said yesterday that it had no record of Lynda Gough having been reported missing. Astonishingly, it was about this time that a separate section of the police force was regularly raiding 25 Cromwell Street. The Drugs Squad made up to six surprise visits to the house in 1972-73 after being told that some of the lodgers were smoking cannabis.

Tragically they could never have known that while they searched for drugs Lynda Gough was probably already dead and buried just feet away. It was almost 20 years before police returned this time as part of a child abuse investigation. In 1993, West was charged with raping and bugging a 13-year-old girl and Rosemary with inciting him.

However, the case was halted after two key witnesses refused to give evidence. Police were unaware of the Wests' previous convictions for sexual assault because the official records had been destroyed.

But during the inquiry, Detective Constable Hazel Savage became increasingly suspicious about the disappearance of the Wests' eldest daughter, Heather, who had not been seen since June 1987. Her inquiries eventually led to the police visiting 25 Cromwell Street on 24 February 1994. At the time they thought they were only looking for the remains of Heather West, but were soon to discover the full horror hidden in the West home.

Detective Superintendent John Bennett, who headed the murder inquiry, yesterday described the Wests as "Jekyll and Hyde" characters. Asked whether the police should have stopped the Wests years ago, he said: "Hindsight is a wonderful thing. You have to look at these things in light of what was happening in the 1970s and not try and look at them with 1990s values... added to the excuses the Wests were able to make. They were very clever."



Called to account: Gloucestershire's Chief Constable, Tony Butler (left), and Jeff James (right), chief executive of the health authority, answer questions. Photographs: Dillon Bryden

## Agencies failed to heed 'warning bells'

Bridge report: 'Web of deceit' fooled professionals over 30 years

NICHOLAS TIMMINS  
Public Policy Editor

Education, health, social services and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children all failed to spot what was happening in the West household despite a range of contacts over more than 30 years, an independent review of the agencies involved said yesterday.

That came despite Charmaine and Anne Marie being placed with foster parents five times between 1965 and 1970 when the first of West's murders occurred; despite a string of hospital contacts; a reference to the NSPCC in 1989; and the disappearance of Charmaine when an eight-year-old schoolgirl.

The explanation that she had simply moved back to her natural mother was accepted

"without question", the report from the independent Bridge consultancy said.

In 1987, West told a school he had "laid out" a child - an incident of abuse which should have been reported to social services. In March 1989, the school did contact the NSPCC about "physical abuse". When contacted, the teenager made no complaint.

In May, the society was told the child had been hit with a mallet - an injury recorded in hospital notes as "finger hit with sledge hammer". But NSPCC notes say a satisfactory explanation was given. At the same time, and unknown to the NSPCC, a paediatrician was investigating child protection issues. To compound the

NSPCC's embarrassment, the file on the case has gone missing - shredded or stolen after the 1992 child abuse inquiry which put the youngest children into care and eventually led to the murder inquiry.

Jim Harding, chief executive of the NSPCC, said he "bitterly regret that we didn't take a different approach" and there were important lessons to be learnt. The society informed neither the health or social services about the case.

The inquiry says it is "quite remarkable" how the West family managed for 30 years to bypass the child protection system. But in the early 1970s only minimal child protection systems existed and even with the benefit of hindsight no child

protection system in the UK could have predicted that the case involved serial killings.

Between 1965 and 1970, Charmaine and Anne Marie were in an out of care, but at West's request. When the children were visited at home, Gloucestershire social services say, there was no sign of abuse. "The Wests were regarded as just another poor family struggling against the odds."

The children were discharged back to the care of West and Rosemary, herself only 16 and just out of care. But Fred said Rena had returned. The case was closed.

Social services then had no contact until 1988 when Arthur Dobbs, who had paid Rosemary for sex, contacted social services

after she told him West was having sex with the children. But he made an anonymous call, and said only that the children were being left alone. The file on that case has also been lost.

Michael Honey, Gloucestershire's chief executive, said yesterday that no-one told social services about abuse until 1992 - when within 48 hours the children were taken into care.

The Bridge report says those involved should be commended as it would have been easy to dismiss the children's talk of Heather being buried under the patio as bizarre "fantasy".

"We must resist judging the events of 10, 20 and 30 years ago... with the benefit of hindsight," Mr Honey said. Today, the "warning bells" in the West

case would be heard, he said. These included the Wests' convictions in 1972 when they tied up and sexually assaulted Caroline Owens, 17, their former nanny. But the Wests were fined only £50 and the case was not referred to social services.

In addition, between 1972 and 1992, the eight children from the West family were treated 31 times in casualty - a rate the Bridge report says was not unusual.

However, hidden in the mass of notes were "warning signs" - several family members had thrush and one child had gonorrhoea, another was taken in with scratching to the breast. And in 1980 Anne Marie was admitted, age 15, carrying what is now known to be West's baby and with an ectopic pregnancy. The father, however, appeared a "caring and attentive parent".

## Vengeful masses celebrate the exorcism of a banal evil

Rosemary West, a hopeful gold cross at her throat, was impressive, even when the judge told her: "If attention is paid to what I think, you will never be released."

And suddenly she was gone. After eight weeks the whole show was over in four minutes. There were no judicial lectures on evil, nothing.

The very air of the courtroom seemed stunned by the brevity of the moment. I doubted the evidence of my ears. Was that it? It was. An evil had been exorcised. We could all go home. Winchester subsided. There was nothing more to be said.

Previously jovial, Mr Justice Mantell's manner had hardened on the final day. When, at 12.20, the jury returned to ask two questions about the lack of direct evidence in the case, he spoke with a new impatience.

But the questions came as a relief to the rest of us. Something had at last shifted inside the jury room. "Back before lunch," we said confidently. And they were - at 12.53 - to find Rosemary guilty of the remaining seven charges.

Nobody has said that the story of Rosemary and Fred West exposed a culture in decay. That's what they said about the murder of Jamie Bulger. Nobody has seriously claimed



BRYAN APPELYARD

that the West case offered a unique insight into the nature of evil. That's what they said about the Moors murders.

They say neither of those things because the West atrocities were peculiarly ordinary. They happened in a nondescript house in a nondescript street. They involved "kinky" sexual practices that, though often called bizarre, are, in fact, absurdly familiar. Even the details of the case - the concreting of the cellar, the patio - had a cosy DIY ring to them. This was evil, certainly, but it was evil at its most thoroughly banal.

Perhaps that is why the atmosphere in the court in this final week was so subdued. Sure, fatigue had set in after eight weeks. But there was more to it than that. There was a deeper feeling of routine, a sense of the familiar absurdity of it all - even of the most gruesome details - a sense, tasteless as it may seem, of comedy.

There was comedy in the bulky figure of Rosemary in her predictably smart clothes and with her weirdly glossy, predictably brown hair. One who knew her had even been heard to say she was "a lot of fun".

There was comedy in the spectacle of the law in all its pomposity murmuring about the arcane variations of sexual desire. And there was comedy in the way snooty Winchester confronted its accidental notoriety.

But, of course, this was all really about unfunny, dismembered bodies. The comedy and the pomp were just different ways of dealing with this unpalatable absolute. The Wests' fantastic ruthlessness subverted one's sense of what was normal and so the backs laughed and the lawyers murmured - doing what is normal with abnormal intensity to distance themselves from these extremities.

The contrast was almost too much to bear. Looking at Rosemary, I found it hard to believe in the simple fact of her appearance. It seemed impossible that all she had done was not branded on her exterior. Surely such depravity should leave some clear mark, or failing that, surely by studying this slightly odd respectability I could follow the chain of causality back to the deranged aban-

toir of 25 Cromwell Street. But I couldn't. Nobody could. However much we might study her pale-rimmed spectacles or her dangling earrings, we could never honestly say we saw the crimes within. People, all people, have this scary inwardness, this alarming ability to conceal.

And that was what it was all about - concealment. The bodies were buried to conceal the sex games that got out of hand. The super-normal facade of Cromwell Street concealed the super-abnormality within. And, when the trial came, the wigs and gowns, Rosemary's clothes and the odd murmured witticism of Mr Justice Mantell concealed the feelings within.

Even the judge's warning to the jury that they were not there to pass moral judgments on the Wests' sex games was a demand for concealment - a demand that the jury hide themselves from themselves, the better to weigh the facts. Hiding things, it's the English way.

For this was just another English murder story, a story of dark deeds behind bland, respectable exteriors. We knew the script too well. This was a repeat, a sequel - the banality of evil celebrated yet again to satisfy the vengeful delights of the masses who, already, will be thirsty for the next atrocity.

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES  
Political Correspondent

The media could face tougher contempt of court laws after an investigation into cheque-book journalism launched by Lord Mackay, the Lord Chancellor, in the wake of the West verdicts.

Lord Mackay, the minister responsible for the contempt laws, is concerned that payments appeared to have been made to witnesses in the trial, raising serious issues of principle that needed to be examined.

The move was immediately welcomed by Rosemary West's defence team and by Douglas French, Tory MP for Gloucester.

Lord Mackay has called for reports of the deals made with

the media. He will then hold discussions with Michael Howard, the Home Secretary, Sir Nicholas Lyell, the Attorney General, and possibly Virginia Bottomley, Secretary of State for National Heritage, over whether the law needs to be tightened.

Brian Levenson QC, the leading prosecution counsel, told Winchester Crown Court yesterday that he had been asked by Sir Nicholas to provide a factual report.

A string of witnesses in the trial admitted having contracts with the media, including Janet Leach, who acted as the "appropriate adult" to sit in on police interviews with Frederick West, who agreed a deal with Mirror Group Newspapers.

Mrs Leach admitted under cross-examination by the defence that she had contacted the *Daily Mirror* because Fred West had asked her to as he wanted the truth told.

The judge, Mr Justice Mantell, reminded the jury in his summing-up that she had lied in her evidence-in-chief by failing to tell the court about the agreement.

Anne-Marie Davis, Rosemary West's stepdaughter, signed a £3,000 deal with the *Daily Star*, while Caroline Owens, who was attacked by the Wests in 1972, stands to gain £20,000 from the *Sun*. Kathryn Holliday, who said she had a lesbian relationship with Rosemary West, entered into an

£8,000 transaction with the *Sunday Mirror*.

Richard Ferguson QC, Rosemary West's defence counsel, challenged the evidence of some of the witnesses, warning the jury that the more sensational their accounts, the more the media would be likely to pay.

Mr Ferguson added: "You may think that, consciously or unconsciously, they know that what they will be paid is contingent upon there being convictions in this case."

The Press Complaints Commission, the industry's voluntary watchdog, said yesterday that "serious allegations" had been made about the payment of witnesses, and it is to consider the implications next week.

## Media deals prompt new look at contempt laws

PATRICIA WYNN DAVIES  
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The father, however, appeared a "caring and attentive parent".

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## CROMWELL STREET MURDERS

It was a marriage made in hell – they were both from dysfunctional homes where there was little love and heavy discipline. They became a couple capable of evil beyond imagination

**'I made them, I can do what I like with them'**

WILL BENNETT

Bishop's Cleeve does not look like the birthplace of a nightmare. The village just north of Cheltenham in Gloucestershire is more suburban than rural, reassuringly ordinary, a sane, safe part of Middle England.

By a dreadful chance Rosemary Letts met Frederick West when they both lived there in 1969. It was to be a marriage made in hell, for he was already a murderer and both were the damaged products of dysfunctional families.

Both were also eventually capable of evil beyond imagination, inflicting pain and death even on their own children. West once told a friend: "I have made them, I can do what I like with them."

She was 15 when they met, a quiet girl who later emerged as the dominant force in the relationship and as a strong disciplinarian with a ferocious temper. West was 12 years her senior, a boastful bully who was loathed by her parents.

Rosemary Pauline Letts was born on 29 November 1953 in Northam, near Bideford, north Devon. She was the fifth of seven children of Billy Letts, a former sailor who was working as an electrical engineer, and his wife, Daisy. Mr Letts was a moody, authoritarian man who ruled his family by violence.

His four sons and three daughters were not encouraged to have friends and Mr Letts was incapable of showing affection towards them. Rosemary's brother, Graham Letts, later recalled: "Dad was a strange man. He never showed his feelings, never gave you a hug at bedtime."

It was a behaviour pattern that was to recur in Rosemary's life, the iron will and the loss of temper leading inevitably to the use of violence. Minor offences were punished ferociously, the much greater sins of adults were uncontrolled. But as a child she was quiet, obedient and babyish but was devoted to her two younger brothers, Graham and Gordon.

The family moved to Plymouth and then in 1964 to Gloucestershire. Rosemary, by now 11, went to the local school but left four years later to work in a haker's shop in Cheltenham. The Letts daughters would never have dared bring a boy home and sex was never discussed, but despite this she was sexually active very early.

She lost her virginity when she was 14 and the police were called in when she began going out with a much older man even before she met West. She also claims that she was raped twice when she was 15.

Fred West, who had already split from his first wife, Rena, came to live on a caravan site in Bishop's Cleeve with their daughter, Anne Marie, and Charmaine, Rena's daughter by another man. He met Rosemary in 1969 as they waited at Cheltenham bus station for the service to Bishop's Cleeve.

She helped him look after the children and within weeks they began a sexual relationship which appalled her parents. Graham Letts said: "Fred was told he was not welcome in our house. There were lots of rows and discussions. Dad was so strict. He could not accept what was going on. As far as he was concerned, Fred was too old and Rose was too young. Dad told her, 'If you see him again I will disown you'."

His daughter challenged his authority and told him that she would continue to see West. Her parents were so worried they contacted social services and had her put into care but he continued to visit her and the order was only effective for three weeks until her 16th birthday.

Her parents were horrified when she became pregnant and wanted her to have an abortion but despite their pleas she moved into West's caravan immediately. Their first child, Heather – who was to become their final murder victim – was born in October 1970 when Rosemary was 16.

West provided her with an escape route from what she regarded as a stifling existence and her relations with her family grew more remote. Her mother, who lives near Reading, Berkshire, has not been in touch since 1986. Mrs Letts, 77, said: "Maybe it was our fault. I feel in some ways responsible for them getting together. We were so strict with our children. Maybe she ran off with him as a rebellion against her upbringing."

West was born in the village of Much Marcle on the boundary of Herefordshire and Gloucestershire on 29 September 1941. He was the son of Walter West, a farm labourer, and his wife, Daisy, and he and his two brothers and three sis-



Happy family, guilty secrets: The Wests and their children at the wedding of daughter Anna-Marie. They are (from left) Mae, Rosemary, Lee-Anne, Louise, Anna's husband, Barry, Anna-Marie, Rosemary junior, Frederick, Stephen, Heather and Tara. Photograph: South West News

ters grew up in a tiny tied cottage. Their upbringing seemed idyllic. His brother Doug said: "We used to play football and cricket, we went rabbiting and we used to help dad on the farm and on his allotment. Fred was popular. He had not got a care in the world and if he ever had he would never show it."

Ann Colborn, who went to the village school with him, said: "He wasn't bad, he seemed quite a normal little boy. They were a close-knit family but rough. They were always rather separate from the rest of the village, they did not mix..."

But there was a darker predatory side to West. He sexually assaulted a girl who rejected his advances at a youth club dance and he got a 13-year-old village girl pregnant, escaping prosecution only when she refused to give evidence.

He met his first wife Rena, who was to become one of his earliest murder victims, in nearby Ledbury and they went back to live in her native Scotland for a couple of years in the early 1960s. There Rena bore Anne Marie, who West fa-

thered, and Charmaine, daughter of an Asian bus driver.

It is believed that West may have served his apprenticeship as a murderer in Glasgow although police say that they cannot identify any definite victims. He drove an ice cream van, an ideal magnet for young girls, and his friend John McLachlan had an allotment and recalls that West used to go there late at night. Mr McLachlan was one of a small group who knew West in this shadowy period of his life.

Another was Anne McFall, a friend of Rena's, who became infatuated with him even though it was no secret that he regularly beat up his wife. After he returned to Herefordshire in the mid-1960s Anne came south and by the summer of 1967 she was heavily pregnant by West. Her remains and those of her unborn child were found near Much Marcle.

By this time West was driving around Gloucestershire sexually assaulting girls who were unwise enough to accept the lifts he offered. He probably murdered Mary Basholm, who disappeared in Gloucester in 1968 and he certainly killed Rena in

early 1970, not long after he moved in with Rosemary.

He also claimed to be an amateur abortionist and when Terence Crick stayed in his caravan at Bishop's Cleeve in the 1970s West showed him a set of crude dirty tools which he said he used for this purpose. It was a foretaste of the butchery to come.

When West met Rosemary he found a willing pupil, who had already shown a strong interest in sex and he could mould to accept his sexual obsessions as normal.

As the years passed, her craving for sex came to equal and in some ways to surpass his. After moving in with him she had to grow up fast. In early 1971, West served six months in jail for theft leaving Rosemary, only 17, on her own in a small flat at 25 Midland Road, Gloucester to look after the children. Charmaine was seven, Anne Marie, five, and Heather just a few weeks old.

The responsibility and the pressure were enormous and she disliked Charmaine, who was as strong-willed as she was and who disappeared at around

that time. It is known that Charmaine was alive at the beginning of June 1971 and that West was released from prison on the 24 June. Police believe Rosemary killed her and that he helped her cover up the murder. Her remains were found at Midland Road.

Rosemary's teenage innocence had gone for ever and the couple were bound together by a terrible secret. The sexual depravity into which they increasingly slipped further tightened this bond.

Elizabeth Agius, a neighbour at Midland Road, who they unsuccessfully tried to get involved in sex games, said: "They had no secrets from each other at all. They knew everything that each other was doing. They got some sort of kick out of it."

By the time they moved to Midland Road, Rosemary was already working as a prostitute and West liked to watch through a hole in the wall as she had sex with other men.

Another of Mrs Agius's conversations with the Wests took a more serious turn. Rosemary said that they used to go out in their car looking for girls to

bring back home to get them into prostitution.

In 1972, the Wests moved to 25 Cromwell Street and got married. Rosemary was a picture of respectability, neatly dressed, sometimes in a twin set and pearls. In the early 1970s they owned a Ford Popular.

In 1972, they gave a lift to hitch-hiker Caroline Owens, who had worked for them as a nanny. She was raped and sexually and physically assaulted. They let her go after she promised to keep silent, but she went to the police who successfully prosecuted the Wests.

It was a mistake the couple did not repeat. Five of the victims found buried at Cromwell Street are believed to have been picked up either hitch-hiking or as they waited for buses between 1973 and 1975.

Carol Cooper and Shirley Hubbard, both 15 and from broken homes, disappeared in Worcester; Lucy Farrington, 21, a deeply religious student vanished in Cheltenham, and Theresa Siegenhafer, also 21, from Switzerland went missing while hitch-hiking across England. Juanita Mott, 18, disappeared while hitch-hiking in Gloucestershire.

All were kept alive, bound, masked and gagged, hanging from a beam with holes drilled in it as they were repeatedly sexually abused in the cellar at 25 Cromwell Street. It is not known how they were killed.

They were buried clockwise in the order in which they died in the cellar, which was now full up. The floor was concreted over and later it became the West children's bedroom, cheerful nursery pictures decorating the wall in the midst of a graveyard. Anne Marie's wedding reception was held there.

Two more victims, later found to have been regular visitors to Cromwell Street, suffered the same fate. Lynda Gough, 19, disappeared in 1973 and Alison Chambers, 17, vanished in 1979. Lynda's remains were discovered under what had been a garage and Alison's in the garden and both had been tied up and abused.

All the bodies had been mutilated, kneecaps removed, and many finger and toe bones missing. West, who had once worked in an abattoir, used to boast that he had carried out medical experiments and he probably practised his butcher's skills on these victims.

Rosemary had seven more children, five daughters and two sons, between 1972 and 1983. Although her husband is listed as their father on their birth certificates, three are of mixed race. West is believed to have fathered many children outside the marriage.

Sex dominated the house, which as well as the Wests and their growing brood of children accommodated an ever-changing population of young lodgers attracted by the cheap rents. One of her many lovers was John Holmes, a market trader,

who recalled: "She was a prostitute, but she never charged me. She used to give me money. We would go out, have a drink and go back to her place and have sex three or four nights a week. She would do anything for you... She was a nymphomaniac."

Janet Goodhall, a former lodger, said: "Rose had a lot of boyfriends, she was on the game... Fred used to criticise her sometimes for bringing all these men back, but I also heard him say once that she wasn't charging enough."

Thursday was the day reserved for Rosemary's paying customers. She advertised in a contact magazine and had her "special room" for clients, which was kept locked, with a

separate doorbell outside and a red warning light in the sitting room which was switched on when she was with them.

Rosemary was bisexual and was particularly excited by violent lesbian sex and this featured in the Wests' huge collection of pornographic videos, many home-made. Amid this atmosphere of sexual frenzy Rose-

mary's influence grew ever stronger. West's brother, Doug, said: "In the early days Rose was very quiet. She had Charmaine, Anne Marie and Heather to look after. But she changed and became the type of woman who wanted to know exactly what he was doing and where he was going."

Anne Marie, West's daughter by Rena, summed it up: "Initially my stepmother was young and impressionable, but as the years passed she became more and more dominant."

In the moral wilderness of Cromwell Street all the rules which normally govern family life were obscenely reversed. Sexually, anything was allowed, but the children were immaculately turned out and subject to fierce discipline on the pettiest of matters. Linda Tonks, whose daughter went out with the Wests' son, Stephen, remembers that the boy was threatened by West when he walked across a floor in muddy boots.

Rosemary's growing dominance almost certainly cost Shirley Robinson, a lodger at Cromwell Street, her life. Like many of the other victims Shidey, 18, came from a broken home but, unlike them, she was not bound and gagged before she was killed. But she was pregnant by West and openly affectionate towards him and thus a rival to Rosemary who became increasingly jealous of her. The Wests probably killed her to solve this domestic problem and she disappeared in May 1978, her remains being found in the Cromwell Street garden. With her were the remains of her unborn child.

The West children did not escape in this atmosphere of utter depravity. Anne Marie was sexually abused from the age of eight, her father making her pregnant when she was 16. Their daughter Heather, whose disappearance, aged 16, in 1987 led to the rumours that she was "under the patio" which eventually sparked off the murder inquiry, was probably killed because her parents feared that she would blow the whistle on this abuse. She was the first born and the last, sad victim of the sordid and evil partnership of Frederick and Rosemary West.

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## CROMWELL STREET MURDERS

## Wife could profit from sale of West's estate

**The legacy:** Rosemary West may benefit from a grim inheritance, but is likely to face claims from relatives of some of the victims

MARIANNE MACDONALD  
Media Correspondent

It may be cold comfort in prison, but Rosemary West could still benefit financially from the estate of her dead husband, Fred West, who committed suicide on New Year's Day.

In normal circumstances the biggest money-spinner for Rosemary West would have been the 132 tapes of his police interviews, his handwritten autobiography, *I Was Loved By An Angel*, and the profits from the "definitive" biography commissioned by the Official Solicitor, Peter Harris.

But Rosemary has made it clear, through her solicitor, Leo Gostley, that she does not wish to profit from the official biography to be written by Geoffrey Wansell, which will rely heavily on Fred West's memoirs and the police interviews.

Instead, she will divide her share among the couple's eight children, according to preference – and some of them are not in her good books.

It is not clear how much money the biography will make. The advance made by its publishers, Hodder Headline, is said to be as low as £100,000 – and Mr Harris has already clocked up about £60,000 in legal fees administering the estate, which must come out of the proceeds it realises.

The family home at 25 Cromwell Street, Gloucester, is also part of her inheritance but is unlikely to be sold. She reportedly supports a local campaign to demolish the house and create a memorial garden for the victims on the site.

The Official Solicitor has promised Mr Wansell access to the 132 police tapes, but Rosemary West is expected to assume the physical ownership of them, as she is entitled to inherit



Peter Harris: Commissioned a biography on Fred West

West's goods and chattels. This raises the unsavoury possibility that she could sell them to the highest bidder at an auction house such as Sotheby's: there is a lucrative market for such grisly items.

The estate also owns the film rights to the Wansell biography, which is due out next year. As the Official Solicitor regards it as his duty to maximise the proceeds of the estate on behalf of West's five surviving children under the age of 18, he will presumably feel obliged to sell them. It is not clear whether Rosemary West would also renounce the proceeds from the sale of rights.

Another factor which could diminish her eventual inheritance is that the relatives of three alleged victims have given notice to the Official Solicitor that they may claim compensation from the estate.

Their move follows an advertisement Mr Harris placed in the *Gloucestershire Echo* in March asking anyone with a possible claim to contact him.

"Whether these claims, or any other claims on behalf of victims are pursued, will depend upon whether the estate is sufficiently solvent to make it worth pursuing them," a spokesman said.



Cromwell Street: An ordinary street in an ordinary city, except that selling houses now poses a particular problem

Photograph: Nicholas Turpin

## Children's secret life

The four youngest children of the West family are living under new identities in foster homes far removed from inner-city Gloucester.

The programme for caring for them is currently costing around £250,000 a year.

The three girls and a boy – now aged between 12 and 17 – have been given new names to protect them from the publicity surrounding their parents' infamy. They are all with foster families at unknown locations outside Gloucestershire.

Another daughter of the West family, now aged 17, is believed to be living with close relatives in Gloucestershire. She

successfully applied to have the care order on her lifted a few months before her mother's trial at Winchester Crown Court.

All the children were placed in care after allegations were made against their parents in August 1992. The four still in care are expected to remain there until they are 18.

The fathers of two of the girls are unknown, but Fred West was the father of the others in care.

Gloucestershire County Council's social-services department is footing the annual bill of around £250,000 a year for the West children, mainly in

the costs of fostering and the special back-up services.

The children are also understood to be receiving special counselling which is likely to continue for some considerable time – for some, possibly all their lives.

A High Court Family Division order prevents the media from publishing details of the children's new homes or making any approaches about their care.

In making a previous order Mr Justice Thorpe said that he regarded two of the children as "extremely vulnerable" – they had been affected by the case and its publicity, he said.

## Life in the shadow of death and depravity

JOHN MCKIE

Life goes on in Cromwell Street. Number 25 is boarded up and has become something of an attraction for visitors to the cathedral city.

Neighbours try to go about their daily business, having endured 18 months of visits from sightseers, police, journalists and TV crews since the grisly finds at the Wests' home.

But the discovery that the Wests had been murdering and hiding the bodies since 1972 is

still taking its toll. House prices have slumped dramatically.

Ernest and Olive Miles have lived there for 43 years. Ernest said of the Wests: "They kept themselves to themselves," he recalls, "and we used to see them going to school every day. All we know is what came out of the newspapers. It has made it quite difficult to move because nobody can sell their house."

There was relief, if not much surprise, that Rose West was found guilty of 10 murders. 57-year-old Dave Limbrick,

who lives at number 31, said: "How could two people live together for so long and one not know what was going on?"

"It's probably better for her that she was found guilty, she'd have to have watched her step in Gloucester if she'd been let off. But then, I think people in prisons have an easy life too."

Ernest Miles added: "It's obvious she had been told by her husband and lawyers not to say anything. It's obvious she knew about the murders."

One neighbour, who has lived

in the street for 44 years, and asked not to be named, was more magnanimous. "I hope she lives to 100 – and gets to eat porridge every day."

"Fred was most polite and I must admit I thought they were an ideal family – but then nobody had much to do with them. In the last 40 years this street has changed from being a nice residential area to being a bed and breakfast area. This street is not close-knit."

Dave Limbrick endorsed the view of Fred West as a happy-

go-lucky neighbour. "He was always grinning, always had a smile on his face about something. I just thought he was a bit thick."

Most residents seemed to be as shocked by the killings as anybody else. They remain bewildered by the depravity revealed.

The house has become a shrine for those fixated with serial killers, and a souvenir hunter has recently stole the '25 Cromwell Street' number plate from outside.

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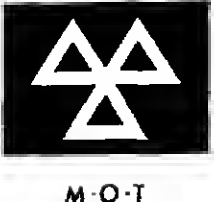
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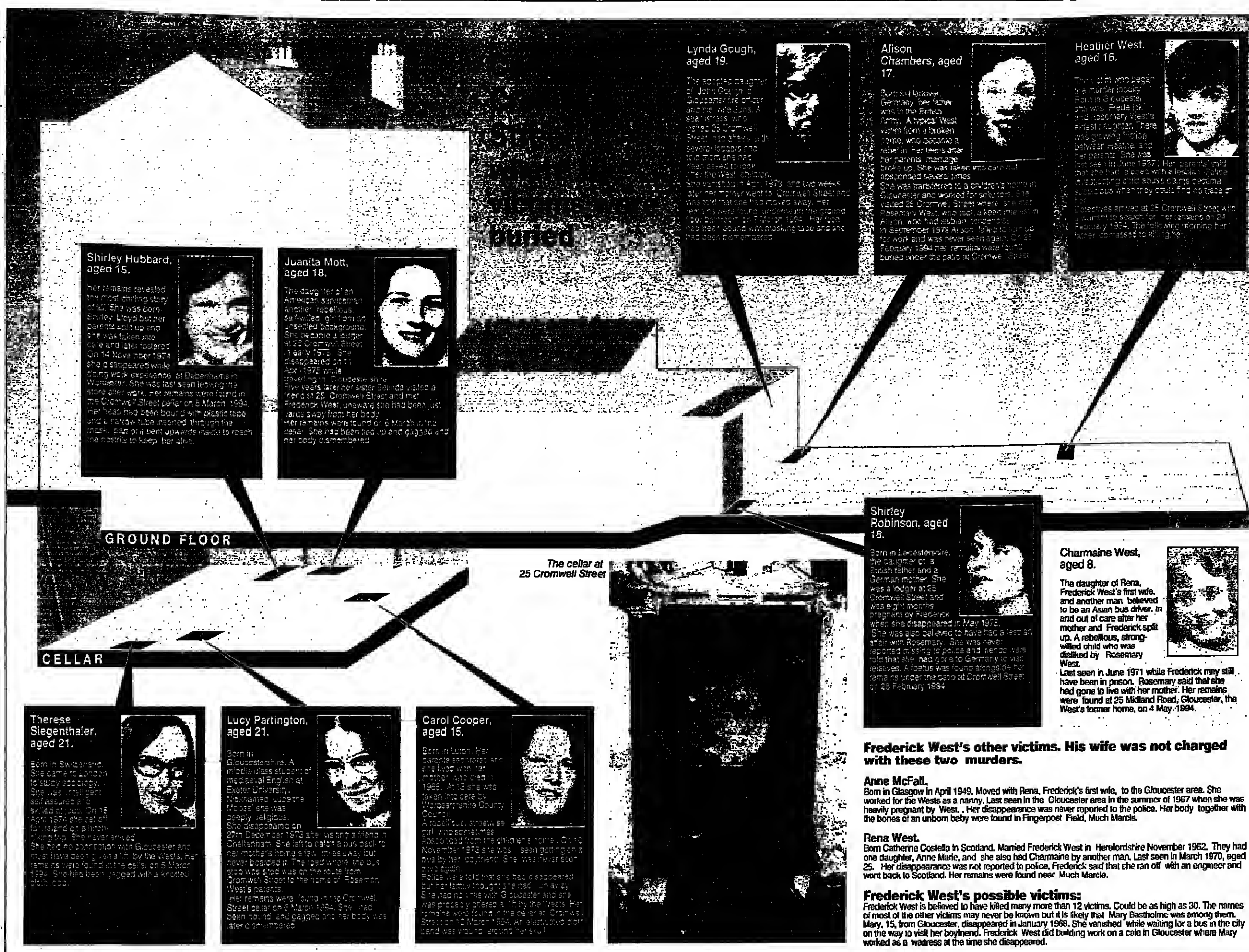
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## CROMWELL STREET MURDERS

From the age of innocence to days of horror: Images of a couple who turned to life of evil



From left to right: Rosemary West, aged six; Frederick West, aged 10; West with his brothers and sisters on a motorbike; and the Wests together in 1984

# Families relive anger and grief

## Haunted eyes of those who lived to tell their tale

WILL BENNETT and PETER VICTOR

For Joan Owen the Cromwell Street murder investigation and the subsequent trial of Rosemary West was the second ordeal she had to endure. Like all the relatives of the victims she spent years wondering what had happened to her daughter, Alison Chambers, always hoping that one day she might get a visit or a telephone call to say she was well.

But the fate that met Alison, tied up, gagged and sexually abused before being killed was beyond her imagination. Mrs

Owen, 52, from Swansea, South Wales, has given up her cleaning job as a result of the depression she has suffered since learning the truth.

She said: "When I think about it it hurts very much. It hurts me to know that she might have been hurt, that she might have called out for me."

Mrs Owen always worried that her headstrong, rebellious daughter would get into trouble. "She would not listen to anything I said," she said.

After she was put into care Alison ran away several times and Mrs Owen warned that if she did so again she could not

expect to come home. In 1979 she vanished aged 17.

Mrs Owen said: "Over all those years that we never heard from her I thought that [it] was because of what I had said."

"Every Christmas we hoped that we would either have a phone call or that she would turn up on the door."

Last year Mrs Owen received a call from the Missing Persons Bureau saying that Alison could be one of the victims whose remains were found at Cromwell Street. She gave a DNA test and later the police returned and said that it had been confirmed.

She said: "My family kept me

going through that time. I had a new granddaughter by my youngest daughter. I kept working. I tried to fill my time as much as I could so I didn't have time to think about it."

"I was very angry because I would like Alison to have seen how much I have changed and I would have liked to have seen how much she had changed."

For the parents of Lynda Gough yesterday's guilty verdict was the "last hurdle in their grief". Lynda, 19, vanished in April, 1973, just weeks before her 20th birthday. She wrote a note to her parents saying she had found a flat in Gloucester.

It was the last they heard from their daughter.

John and June Gough, in a statement issued through their family doctor, said: "We feel in our anger and our sadness that Lynda has been publicly murdered again and we have been bereaved again at every turn of events since she disappeared 22 years ago."

"Now we hope that with the trial ended we have taken the last hurdle in our grief."

"We do not wish to be interviewed or photographed. There is no healing or gain for us in any publicity."

"We wish only, yet again, to

rebuild our torn-up lives and to remember the happiness that we had with Lynda."

Their GP Dr Anthony Lynch, of Highnam, Gloucester, said: "The Goughs will greet the verdict with relief, but their main relief is that the trial is over."

"The guilty verdict means that it's final. Had there been any other verdict there would have been loose ends. It's complete, it's finished, it's over."

But with a slew of books, films, television documentaries and dramas expected, it seems unlikely that the story of 25 Cromwell Street has ended.

WILL BENNETT

Anne Marie Davis looks haunted with the anxious face of an animal which has been kicked repeatedly. Like all survivors of the Wests' brutality, the nightmares will always be with her.

The daughter of Fred West and Rena his murdered first wife lives in a semi-detached house on a Gloucester council estate with her children, Michelle, 11, and Carole, eight. She is divorced from their father.

She showers them with affection, compensating for her own brutal upbringing. A friend said: "It's the kids that keep her going. She is like a lioness with her cubs and is very protective."

Anne Marie, 31, never had a childhood. Her father had sexual intercourse with her regularly from the age of nine and made her pregnant when she was 15. She was made to have sex with her mother's lovers from the age of 11. She never revealed what was going on, venting her feelings by becoming a bully at school. In the year before she left school, she was absent 60 times but no checks were made.

She left home at 15 and for a time kept a roof over her head by sleeping with men in return for accommodation. Later she became pregnant by her boyfriend, Chris Davis, and in 1984 they married. By then she was seeing her father and step-mother again.

Despite everything she loved her father and visited him in prison. When he committed suicide in prison she learned about it from a relative, took a drugs overdose and was rushed to hospital. She was taken to hospital again in between her first and second days in the witness box at Winchester Crown Court.

With a day off because the jury was visiting Cromwell Street, she drank too much alcohol which reacted with anti-depressants she is on all the time. The friend said: "If you were a child in Cromwell Street you were not inquisitive. The reason why Anne Marie is alive

is that she kept her head down and avoided eye contact."

Caroline Owens, who in 1972 was sexually assaulted by the Wests who were later fined for her experience and was still receiving counselling. Now 39, she is a divorced mother of three and lives near Gloucester.

She was a typical West victim, her parents splitting up when she was four and her mother later marrying another man with whom Caroline had a difficult relationship.

She was living at home in Gloucestershire when the Wests picked her up and offered her a job as their nanny. She left but when she was hitch-hiking on another occasion they again picked her up.

She was sexually assaulted by both Wests and raped by West but decided against pressing the latter charge. Later she suffered from depression and low self-esteem and in 1976 took an overdose of tranquillisers.

She told police: "I have been very sensitive to people being close to me and cuddling me since being abducted by Fred and Rose. In particular I am wary of other adult females, even friends. I have a terrible feeling of worthlessness."

She feels guilty, believing that if she had pressed charges against West and he had been convicted the murders could have been prevented.

A third survivor is a woman referred to in court only as Miss A, now 33. She was also the product of a broken home who was taken into care aged 13 and sent to Jordansbrook Children's Home, Gloucester. She got to know the Wests and in 1977 was raped and sexually assaulted when she visited Cromwell Street. She said later: "They abused my trust. They offered me the love and comfort of a family when I was in care and they used me."

She married a violent alcoholic who abused her, has twice attempted suicide and has psychiatric problems. She has even hallucinated that Fred West was following her.

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## Royal revelations: Duty calls the Prince and Princess of Wales to joint visit to Argentina

### Heir feigns apparent bout of madness

STEVE BOGGAN  
London  
PHIL DAVISON  
Buenos Aires

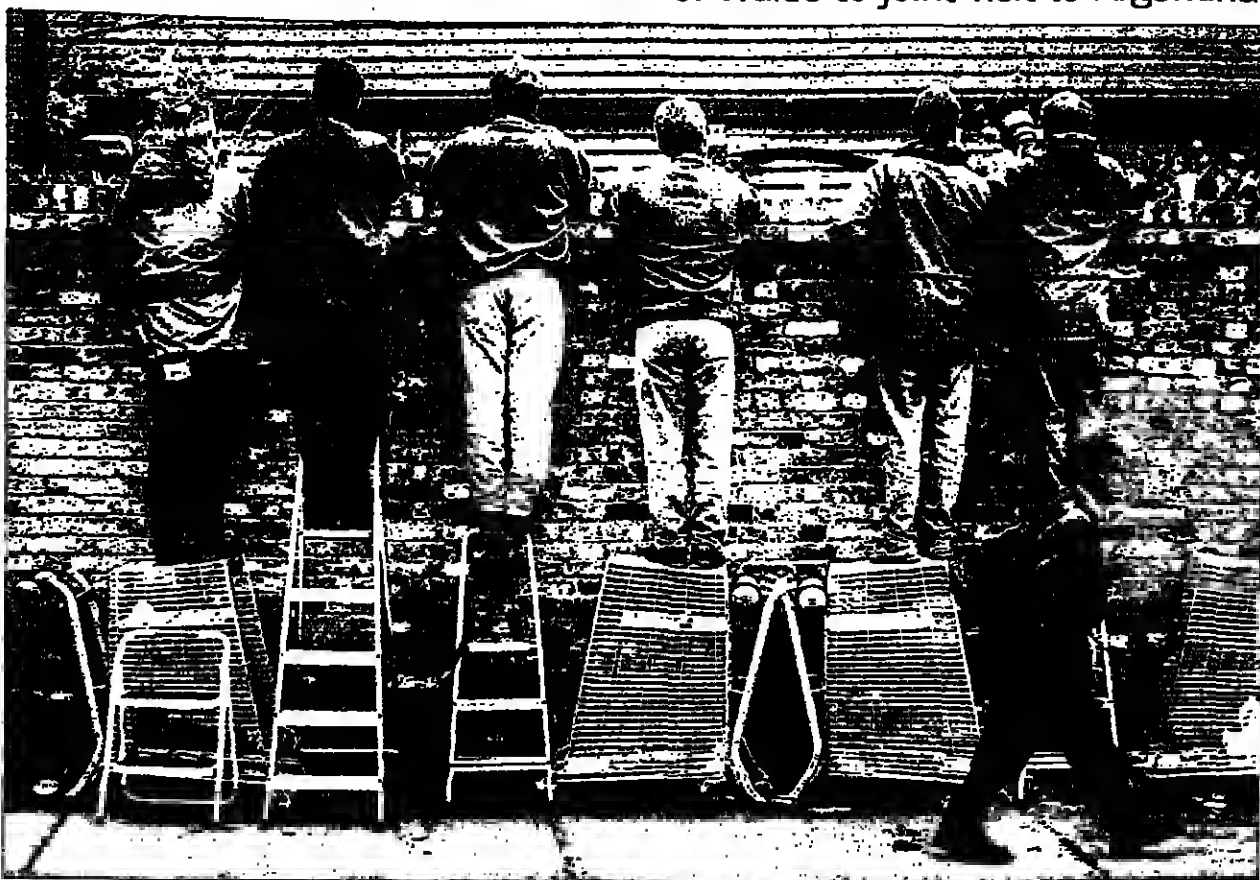
It can't be easy being heir to the throne when your wife has admitted adultery, when you can't remember where you are, or what day it is, and when your subjects have begun to jeer you in the street.

That, coupled with a case of self-confessed "advanced decrepitude" and a hairstyle growing more like Bobby Charlton's each day, would be enough to induce in most people - the kind of madness associated with a more senior royal called George.

But yesterday, while the world continued to talk about that interview, the Prince of Wales got on with what he does best: jollyng businessmen into battling for Britain while cleaning up the environment.

The ink had no sooner dried on the New York Daily News's headline: "Yes, I Cheated on Chuck", than Chuck himself was arriving at the Royal Society of Arts in London to make the fifth Norsk Hydro Awards for innovations in the water industry.

He wore a sharp blue double-breasted suit and looked tanned, if a little tired, beneath



Out of focus: Photographers peer into the Harbour Club, Falmouth, hoping to snap the Princess of Wales. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

freeways by James Barry entitled *The Progress of Human Knowledge*. His own knowledge was, he said, a bit dodgy on a day-to-day basis because of his age - or was it because of the pressure?

"My only problem as I get older," he told his audience, "is that I think I must be suffering from a certain amount of advanced decrepitude and, combined with the fact that I receive a certain number of invitations,

I have less time to remember what I am doing today and what event I am at and whether I have the right speech notes.

"As you may have gathered, I am not entirely convinced I have the right speech notes." To naps of laughter, he added, possibly as a dig at the assembled media: "This is a shame, because I'm constantly intrigued by what I have to say myself."

As it transpired, the Prince did have the right notes and he

sped through the engagement with practised ease emerging 41 minutes later to be greeted by a warm crowd. On Tuesday night, he was jeered by a small section of the crowd outside the premises of the new James Bond film, *GoldenEye*.

The Princess of Wales, meantime, departed for Argentina last night in the sort of "ambassadorial" role that she told the BBC's Martin Bashir she sees for herself in the future.

During the four-day visit, she will attend a number of charitable fund-raising events and will meet President Carlos Menem, a man who, it will not have escaped Buckingham Palace's notice, is famous for admitting to being a serial seducer of beautiful women.

Female journalists warned the Princess to "watch out for the old hand on the knee" from a man with a lifelong reputation as a *mujerero* (womaniser).

## MoD under fire for spending on luxury offices

CHRIS BLACKHURST  
Westminster Correspondent

The Ministry of Defence was lambasted by an influential committee of MPs yesterday for allowing delays - costing the taxpayer up to £2m a week - to a prestige building project.

Labour was quick to link the criticism from the Commons Public Accounts Committee, to the departure of the MoD's head of defence procurement, Dr Malcolm McIntosh. His job, paying between £90,000 and £125,000 a year, was advertised at the weekend.

MoD officials strenuously denied Dr McIntosh's leaving had anything to do with the committee's report, which followed an earlier study from the National Audit Office, the public finance watchdog, and was the latest in a series of attacks by the committee and the NAO on overspending and delays to defence contracts.

In yesterday's report, the focus was on Abbey Wood, the new £248m headquarters for Dr McIntosh's procurement executive, at Bristol. The committee said it was "concerned that the Abbey Wood project is significantly behind schedule." Each

week of delay is estimated to cost the taxpayer £2m.

The sheer scale of Abbey Wood has raised eyebrows at Westminster, not least because it is intended as the base for the civil servants charged with obtaining the best deal for the taxpayer on defence orders.

Extending to 98 acres, the complex, which is to house 5,700 procurement officials, embraces an ornamental lake, 5,000 trees, 28,000 shrubs, 230 bathrooms, 26 lifts; a specially constructed railway station, a 100-pupil nursery, an Italian suspension bridge and covered walkways.

Critics point out that while the design can be justified because the project is intended to save £100m a year by bringing together civil servants from all over Britain on one site, none of the luxury was necessary. Even more money could have been saved, they maintain, if the project had not been so extravagant.

The PAC said it was "most unsatisfactory that some of the Department's investment appraisals had weaknesses which might have made a material difference to the results".

MPs were particularly concerned that contractors had said they could have submitted lower bids if the MoD had allowed them more time. That, plus the fact that "in the contractors' view, the department were unwilling to consider alternative solutions... may mean that the Department have not achieved the best value for money."

Dr McIntosh has been chief of defence procurement since 1991. Before joining the MoD he was Secretary of Australia's Department of Industry, Technology and Commerce.

Appointed on a five-year contract, much of his time has been spent answering criticism of expenditure on major defence projects. These included the Eurofighter programme and the new nuclear submarine dry dock and missile facility at Faslane on the Clyde.

He is understood to be returning to Australia to become chairman of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation.

An MoD spokesman denied that Dr McIntosh's departure had anything to do with overspending: "He has been here for five years and is moving on to pastures new."

## Blair rounds on Brown's critics

DONALD MACINTYRE  
and STEPHEN GOODWIN

Tony Blair last night vigorously defended Gordon Brown against his Labour critics with a ringing declaration to the Shadow Cabinet that he was "100 per cent" behind his shadow Chancellor and the strategy he had unveiled on the eve of Tuesday's Budget.

Mr Blair moved decisively to quell rumblings within senior party ranks against Mr Brown since a row within the Shadow Cabinet last week over Mr Brown's plans to dock 40 per cent of state benefit from young people refusing a job or training place under Labour's planned crash programme to reduce unemployment.

Details of the conflict - in which Robin Cook, the shadow Foreign Secretary, reportedly questioned Mr Brown's plans - were leaked in what some senior party figures see as a deliberate attempt to undermine Mr Brown's position.

Mr Blair went out of his way

at last night's Shadow Cabinet meeting to congratulate Mr Brown's "brilliant" and "extremely imaginative" pre-Budget commitment to a long-term target of reducing the starting rate of income tax to 10p in the pound. The Labour leader said that the Tories were clearly worried about the Opposition's positioning in advance of the Budget and warning shadow ministers that he would not tolerate efforts to undermine Mr Brown, he added: "People had better understand that."

Mr Blair's move came as Kenneth Clarke, the Chancellor, reaffirmed the Government's long-term target of a standard income tax rate of 20p in the pound. A series of senior Shadow Cabinet members, including Mr Cook, are to make a series of speeches over the next few days backing Mr Brown by taking up the themes of his pre-Budget statements of policy. Mr Blair yesterday referred to support for Mr Brown at yesterday's meeting of the Parliamentary Labour Party.

### IN BRIEF Mayhew attacks IRA over arms

The IRA was attacked last night by Patrick Mayhew, Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, for failing to give up arms, and causing the stalemate over the peace process.

His attack came as John Major and John Bruton, the Taoiseach, tried to rescue hopes of a summit tomorrow, to announce their plans for bringing Sinn Féin to negotiations. David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, warned his plans for an elected assembly in Ulster could be the only way out of the stalemate.

### Car workers' action

Leaders of 10,000 Vauxhall workers yesterday gave seven days' notice of industrial action at Ellesmere Port and Luton - an overtime ban from next Wednesday and a reduction in the working week - in protest at a 3.5 per cent pay offer.

### Wife rape

The European Court of Human Rights has upheld the offence of rape within marriage, rejecting claims by two British men that it was not possible - under 250-year-old common law - for a man to rape his wife.

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### For a golf lover:

Anyone who likes golf will love *The Man Who Inherited a Golf Course*. This superb novel tells the story of Trevor Duffinfield who wakes up one morning to find that he is the owner of his very own golf club - farways, bunkers, clubhouse and all. There's one way to keep the club he must win a golf match. And he's never played a round of golf in his life. "The scenario is tailor made for Vernon Coleman's light and amusing anecdotes about country life and pursuits," said the Sunday Independent. "Very readable," said Gull World. "Highly enjoyable in the best tradition of British comic writing," said the Evening Chronicle. "The mix of anecdotes and moments of sheer farce make for an absorbing read," said the Evening Telegraph. A terrific present for anyone who enjoys golf. Far more fun than another pair of socks or a bottle of olive oil.

### For a cat lover:

Feline fans will love *Alice's Diary* which tells of a year in the life of a mixed tabby cat. Alice shows us, with great humour and insight, what it is really like to be a cat. Our files are bursting with letters from readers who love this book. "What a wonderful book, so beautifully written, it was a great pleasure to read," wrote Mrs Y of Essex. "Please send copies of Alice's Diary to the eleven friends on the accompanying list. It is a wonderful book which will give them all great pleasure," wrote Mr R of Lancashire. Alice's Diary is delightfully illustrated throughout. But we warn you: when you see it you may not want to give it away! An absolute must for all cat and animal lovers. Guaranteed to give more joy and laughter than almost any other present you can choose.

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## news

# Forte takeover: Behind Granada's £3.4bn bid for a hotel group bathed in success lies a family's rise from humble origins

## Dynasty that climbed mountains to claim the Savoy



Top man: Rocco Forte, chief executive of Trust House Forte, whose charm belies a steely core

### The Forte family tree



### VICKY WARD

If Granada's bid to take over the Forte group succeeds, it will mark the beginning of the end of one of Britain's richest and fastest-growing business dynasties.

The Fortes' rise began in 1911 when Lord Forte's father, Rocco, left a life of agricultural labour in Montforte, a hamlet in the Italian mountains, to emigrate to Scotland. He entered the restaurant trade, albeit in a humble way, running

the Savoy Cafe in Alloa, in what was then Clackmannanshire. Though the cafe did not bear much resemblance to its London namesake (it had a reputation for good ice-cream) he had made a gigantic leap. Rocco's ambition was multiplied 10 times over in his eldest son, Charles. Even as a teenager he worked out that if you knew the figures that equated to a profit/cost ratio in one cafe, there was no reason why other cafes could not be run according to the same rules.

When Charles hit his twenties expansion became the family motto. Milk bars were his area - "I did not even know what a milk bar was," he says in his autobiography, but he read about them, visited one in London and bought a chain. "He had," says one acquaintance, "a shrewd eye for undervalued property - that was really what made him so successful."

In 1938 Rocco retired and the Fortes moved south. Charles's appetite increased. He moved from milk bars into hotels - most famously buying the Trust House empire. The basis for Forte's success was his skill with figures. He knew the sums that would reap financial reward. However, those same sums cost him quality. The Trust House hotels were criticised for going "down market" and the standard of food and drink in Trust House Forte establishments was legendarily bad. But they made money.

By the Eighties Charles had a helper at hand. His son Rocco, knighted last year, who had an Oxford degree and had been born with something of a silver spoon in his mouth, nominally took over as Forte chief executive in 1982. (His father did not relinquish real control for several years, causing Sir Rocco to have a downrodeo image which proved difficult to lose). Now, though, it is universally accepted that he is a great success in his own right. "Rocco does not have the same fire in his belly as his father," says Christina Odene, editor of the *Catholic Herald* (of which the Fortes own 20 per cent). "But that is not to say he is not ambitious."

"He is always incredibly well-

prepared at board meetings. And he is utterly charming. A surface of charm, if you like coats his steely core."

Sir Rocco's quieter nature was arguably what procured the prize that his father had sought for so many years. In 1985 he agreed to something his father would never have contemplated: to own 68 per cent of non-voting shares in the Savoy. This meant he was not the hotel's owner but merely a rank and file director.

The tactic, however, paid off. In 1994, when the Savoy management was deemed simply too "laid-back", the Fortes took over.

Sir Rocco, who has an heir of his own, Charles, four, is not the only member of the Forte children to have helped Lord Forte. Rocco's sister, Olga Polizzi, is often quoted as being Britain's highest-paid businesswoman. She reportedly earns over £2.2m a year as the person in charge of the chain's interior decor. She is also famously responsible for Norman Lamont's black eye (she was saying good night to him, when he then beat allegedly got jealous).

Ms Polizzi's eldest daughter, Alexandra, 25, has been working in a hotel in Hong Kong. So the dynasty continues to expand. Or does it?

Granada's bid is not the only thing halting the family's obsession with the hotel business. Ms Polizzi said recently of her daughter's plans: "Alex would make such a good barrister. I really do not want her to go straight into the family business. I would prefer Alex to do something on her own. Rocco understands this."

Granada, presumably, would not agree.

## Leisure giants' influence felt across nation

JOHN SHEPHERD

The names of Forte and Granada are stamped indelibly on the social fabric of Britain. They cater for both rich and the poor, offering Little Chef restaurants, motorway service stations, Travelodge, the Grosvenor House Hotel in London - and *Coronation Street*.

Granada and Forte are giants in the £100bn-a-year United Kingdom leisure industry. Their social influence dates back decades, and their corporate structures owe much to numerous aggressive and friendly takeover deals over the years. Granada started life as a private theatre company in 1934. Forte was incorporated in 1903 as the Hertfordshire Public House Trust company.

In terms of management style and culture, however, the two could not be further apart. Sir Rocco Forte, chairman, was born into business, and his family - headed by Lord Forte, the company's octogenarian president - exerts great control over the company. In contrast, Gerry Robinson, Granada's chief executive and chairman designate, was the son of a Donegal carpenter and the 9th of 10 children.

Both, however, have had to adapt fast to the recent changes in the leisure industry. In Forte's case the recession has been the catalyst, and in Granada's it has been the competitive march of satellite and cable television.

Almost every hotel operator, Forte included, was caught cold by the recession, and they are still only recovering slowly from relying on an antiquated approach of charging high prices for each customer, instead of per room as in the United States. The legacy of that strategy is that a large part of the industry is being run by receivers.

Forte is beginning to benefit from the marketing changes, but its financial position still shows scars from the recession. Shareholders started to pay for the

climb out of recession when the dividend was first left unchanged in 1992, then cut by almost a quarter a year later.

Forte has also thrust itself down the path of hotel management rather than owning great lumps of prime real estate, which are costly to maintain. Managing hotels on a fee basis, or franchises, is the path the big hotels groups are taking.

Hotels are at the forefront of mass market end of the leisure industry, which thrives on high customer turnover coupled with the ability to extract as much money as possible from customers once they are on site by encouraging them to use hotel bars, restaurants, accompanying golf courses and fitness centres.

Recession also hurt the television industry, where the cash well, used to being topped up by big spending advertisers, dried up. Heavy cost-cutting was largely achieved through a rapid series of take-overs - including Granada swallowing London Weekend Television.

Granada now produces some of the biggest television hits including the award-winning *Cracker*, *Coronation Street* and *Prime Suspect*, from a much lower cost base than before Mr Robinson took the helm in the early Nineties.

One of the most striking contrasts between the two management styles is how they have adapted to the changing habits of the motorist consumer.

Granada, analysts argue, has the edge over Forte in motorway service stations by being quicker to ditch the one-stop greasy spoon image in favour of more comfortable, friendly sites offering customers a choice of decor and food.

Forte, meanwhile, is having to rethink how it markets Little Chef and Happy Eater, the market-leading roadside restaurant chains in the face of increasing competition from the big pub groups, such as Bass and Whitbread.

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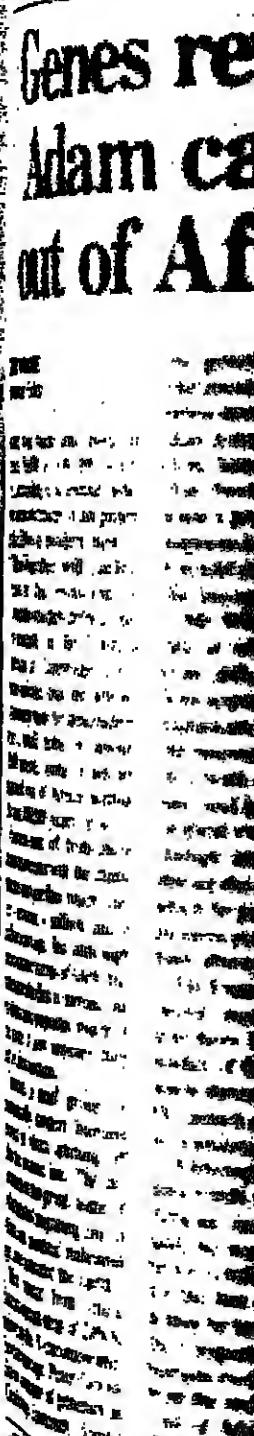


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# 'It's awful. It's like the Black Death has struck'

**Meningitis outbreak:** Confusion and distress in Lincoln as health authority hands out antibiotics to pupils

REBECCA FOWLER

The football fields were empty and the netball courts were shut up at the City School in Lincoln yesterday, as pupils arrived to pick up emergency antibiotics to protect them against the outbreak of meningitis that has killed five people in the county in less than two months.

Two of the victims were pupils from the school and a third, Caroline East, 14, was still critically ill last night in Lincoln County Hospital, after being admitted with meningitis on Monday.

An atmosphere of confusion and distress hung over the school, which will remain closed until at least Friday. Local health authority officials were overseeing the handing out of the antibiotics in the main hall, after reversing late on Tuesday night an earlier decision only to administer the drugs to 15- and 16-year-olds and offering them instead to all pupils.

Many of the parents were worried not only about their children at the school, but also that their younger children may be at risk from siblings. Among them was Susan York, whose daughter Leanne, 13, is at the City School.

"We were phoned up at 10 o'clock this morning and asked to come up to the school for antibiotics, and there's a lot of confusion over what's happening," Mrs York said.

"Leanne is certainly not coming back until we're sure every-

thing is completely okay. She's got an eight-year-old brother, and a lot of us are concerned it could spread to other schools.

"It's a real shock... You never think it's going to be on your doorstep. A lot of us feel let down that more wasn't done sooner."

The first meningitis victim at the school was Kelly Roberts, 15, who died at the end of October. The second, Sam Binns, 15, died last weekend.

As pupils cycled aimlessly around the entrance to the school yesterday, they expressed their shock at the deaths of their classmates. "It's awful, it's like the Black Death has struck," Amber Smith, 12, said.

"Everyone has been in tears over it, and I couldn't believe it when we were told about Caroline at registration yesterday. She's so tall and strong-looking, and she's always really cheerful."

All City School trips have been cancelled, including an ice skating outing to Doncaster this weekend, and football and netball matches with other schools have been postponed.

The local health authority was offering reassurance yesterday over its decision to extend the prescribing of antibiotics.

Dr Michael Le Ceyt, a consultant in communicable disease control for Lincolnshire Health Authority, who is heading the investigation into the outbreak, said: "We decided not to give them earlier, because based on past experience we did not feel there was a need to."

Giving mass medication to people who do not need it could be irresponsible."

The seventh victim of the meningitis outbreak, a 40-year-old Lincoln man, was also still critically ill in the Queen's Medical Centre in Lincoln last night. In September cases of the disease in the county were reported to have risen by 38 per cent in a year.

The results of swab tests taken from 15- and 16-year-olds at the City School will come through on Friday. They will identify whether the outbreak strain of meningitis is present in the group.

Barbara Peck, headteacher of the City School, was trying to offer comfort to parents yesterday. "We've closed the school because we thought parents would be more comfortable if their children weren't there," she said. "I'm told it's just a statistical coincidence, but to have this many cases makes it hard to believe."



Emergency measures: Pupils arriving at City School, Lincoln, yesterday for preventive medicine against meningitis

Photograph: Glynn Griffiths

## Genes reveal Adam came out of Africa

TOM WILKIE  
Science Editor

Adam was black and lived in Africa 50,000 to 100,000 years ago, according to scientists who have detected traces of his genes in the DNA of modern men.

Taken together with earlier results on the evolution of women, the studies carried out by geneticists in the United States and at Cambridge University indicate that the whole of humanity may be descended from a small tribe of about 10,000 people, some of whom migrated out of Africa within the past 100,000 years or so.

Humans split off from their common ancestor with the chimpanzees and gorillas much earlier - between 4 million and 6 million years ago. But although these archaic forms of early humans were the first to spread out of Africa and populate much of the globe, it now appears they left no descendants.

Instead, a small group of anatomically modern humans evolved in Africa, splitting off from the archaic line. The descendants of this group, some of whom started migrating out of Africa one hundred millennia ago, have inherited the earth.

Men inherit from their fathers a special strip of DNA, known as the Y-chromosome. Several years ago, Peter Goodfellow, professor of genetics at Cambridge University, found

the genetic "switch" on the Y-chromosome which makes embryos develop into males rather than females. His research student, Simon Whitfield, realised that because the Y-chromosome's genes are not shuffled as happens to other chromosomes, it would carry information about the lineages of humanity.

Mr Whitfield compared the rate at which Y-chromosomes from different human populations acquired mutations with the mutations in a chimpanzee's Y-chromosome. Assuming that they both mutated at the same rate, and knowing from archaeological evidence how long ago chimps and humans diverged, this set the molecular "clock" by which he judged how quickly the modern populations of humans have diverged.

He found less divergence between males than other researchers had found in earlier studies of the DNA passed down solely through the maternal line. He cannot explain the difference in population structure.

Although most molecular data tends to point towards an African origin, Mr Whitfield said, he warned that "we can't be too confident about the dates for the last common ancestor". It may be impossible to disprove the competing idea that modern humans evolved at the same time from the archaic populations, but "out of Africa is the most parsimonious hypothesis".



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## news

# Party politics turns Britain into an 'apathetic' nation

DONALD MACINTYRE  
Political Editor

Britons are now deeply apathetic about party politics, strongly punitive towards criminals, and surprisingly in favour of imposing higher taxes on the rich, according to the annual survey of British Social Attitudes, published today.

Startling figures in the survey suggest that public cynicism about the political system has plumbed new depths, with fewer than one in four voters believing that British governments of any party put the national interest above that of the party.

The lack of interest is even more dramatic among teenagers - included in a special sample of the survey for the first time. Only one in eight 12- to 19-year-olds expresses a strong interest in politics, compared with one in three of those aged 25 or over.

And although nine in ten teenagers, despite growing up during the Thatcher years, know that John Major is not the first male Prime Minister, and eight in ten know the Tories won the last election, the 12- to 19-year-olds are much less knowledgeable about more complex subjects. For example, only four

in ten know that there are more than 100 MPs.

The public's apathy is also marked when it comes to local politics. In 1965, three-quarters of the public believed that voting in local elections mattered, compared to just over half who now believe it. Interestingly, in view of what many commentators believe is a decline in the powers of local government, more than twice as many people (39 per cent) favour less central control of local government compared with 16 per cent who want more central control.

Only one in three people believes councillors can be trusted to place the needs of their own area above those of their own political party. But in this respect local councillors do better than MPs - trusted by only 25 per cent of the electorate to put the national interest first.

The survey, produced by Social and Community Planning Research, suggests that the "British public has become more punitive and less libertarian over the last decade in its attitude towards crime and punishment".

Fewer than three in five people (58 per cent) compared with 67 per cent 10 years ago now support the classic view of the

British legal system "that it is better to let a guilty person go free than to convict an innocent person". About the same majority is still solidly in favour of the reintroduction of capital punishment for all murders.

While a majority of people (58 per cent) favour higher spending on social welfare, most are also well aware that this would mean higher taxes. But there has been a sharp increase in the proportion of people who believe that the burden of higher taxes should fall especially on the better off. Fifty-six per cent of people now take that view, compared with only 32 per cent a decade ago, and this includes 51 per cent of those in the top third of the income scale.

Figures on attitudes to Europe show deep divisions on whether there should be further integration, although 77 per cent of the population do not believe there is now any question of leaving the European Union. The number thinking that the United Kingdom should withdraw has dropped from 42 per cent to 17 per cent in the past 10 years. The survey also suggests that younger and better educated voters are more pro-European in outlook.



Seeking a retirement home: An elderly tube train on show yesterday at Moorgate station in the City of London. It is to be the star lot at Brooks' auction on 5 December of redundant London Underground signs, clocks, litter bins and other memorabilia. Photograph: Edward Webb

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## news

# Feminists told that fat is a health risk issue

GLENDA COOPER

Feminists who claim that it is fine to be fat are ignoring medical evidence of substantial health risks, a senior nutritionist told a conference on obesity yesterday.

Professor John Garrow, editor of the *European Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, told the conference, Exploding the Myths of Obesity, that an ideal of extreme thinness was not an invention of late twentieth-century male oppression but had been around for centuries.

Professor Garrow said that although writers such as Suzy Orbach (author of *Fat is a Feminist*)

For example a 5ft 8in woman weighing 11st would have a BMI of 23.3, whereas if she weighed 15st she would have a BMI of 30.

Professor Garrow said that links between obesity and disease had not seemed direct in the past because variants such as cigarette smoking and previous disease had not been taken into account.

"It's like jumping off a high building," he said, "you could say there are no risks jumping off, only when you hit the ground fast."

It had previously been thought that mortality doubled at a BMI of 38 but a study published in September this year of 115,000 nurses, which eliminated smokers and those who died within four years, showed that mortality doubled by the time the BMI reached 32.

Professor Garrow also attacked Kim Chernin's theory in *Womansize The Tyranny of Slenderness* that fat people suffered more from problems such as hypertension because of the stigmatisation they faced.

He said that he had studied the Pima Indians of Arizona who regarded fat as good "there is no social stigma of obesity", he said, "but 50 per cent of those over 40 are diabetics".

He called for every local authority to set up a self-financing non-profit making slimming club where people could be treated by trained dieticians.

And Professor Tom Sanders, Professor of Nutrition and Dietetics at King's College, London, told the conference at Bart's hospital in central London that writers of diet books "peddled half-truths and science fiction", particularly the idea that cellulite was caused by toxins. He said cellulite was the French word for fat invented by the cosmetic industry and "was nothing to do with toxins".

"The diet book industry is a capitalist's dream. It churns out products that don't work," he added.

## FAT FACTS

The percentage of obese people in Britain has doubled since 1980 and is expected to double again by 2005.

A quarter of British women and a fifth of men may be obese by 2005; government targets are for only 6 per cent of men and 8 per cent of women.

Death from coronaries is three times higher in obese people.

Obesity is increasing because although food intake has declined by 20 per cent since the 1960s, energy expenditure has dropped even faster and the proportion of fat in the diet has remained stable.

Issue) and Kim Chernin had "good reason to complain that women were pressurised to be unreasonably thin", they should not let women think that there were few health risks associated with being obese.

The percentage of obese people in Britain has doubled since 1980. Obesity is measured using the body mass index (weight in kilograms over height in metres squared): a BMI of less than 20 is underweight, 20-25 ideal, 25-30 overweight and over 30 obese.

# Trouble in 'Arcadia' as developers move in



Hard to handle: A Holt's Field resident is removed from his chalet home by bailiffs yesterday

Photograph: Philip Rees

DANNY PENMAN

The first two families at Holt's Field, a rural hamlet near Swansea, were evicted yesterday by a property developer who wants to knock down their homes and build an executive housing estate.

Holt's Field, on the Gower Peninsula, has been the subject of a series of bitter legal wrangles for the past six years. The ground under the hamlet of 27 chalets, which has been compared to Arcadia, the legendary Greek idyll, was bought by a property development company in 1989.

Elitestone wanted to demolish the chalets to redevelop the hamlet. The company was refused planning permission by Swansea City Council, lost an appeal to the Welsh Office, and also in the High Court.

But Tim Jones, director of Elitestone, decided to press on and evict the people from their homes. After another series of court battles, Elitestone won the right to evict them as trespassers.

More than 50 police, bailiffs and security guards arrived to evict the people from the first five chalets shortly before 8am yesterday. The residents had installed trip wires linked to an alarm system to alert them of approaching bailiffs but they managed to cut through them without triggering the system.

After the police, bailiffs and security guards left, a team of carpenters arrived to repair the chalets and friendly squatters moved in to the homes.

One resident, Will Sked, said they were now planning their resistance and seeking legal advice to try to prevent the squatters from being evicted.

# Ecstasy girl may have drunk too much water

Doctors who treated the ecstasy victim Leah Betts believe she may have died because she drank so much water that her brain swelled, restricting its blood supply.

The doctors, who treated Leah as she lay in a coma after taking an ecstasy tablet at her 18th birthday party, are expected to make their claims when the inquest into her death gets under way early next year.

Ecstasy makes its users thirsty - but also causes the body to produce a hormone which retains water.

If a lot of water is drunk quickly, the body cannot get rid of it fast enough and the brain swells, putting pressure on the stem and resulting in a coma.

Yesterday the inquest was formally opened and adjourned. The South Essex coroner, Dr Malcolm Weir, heard that Leah, an A-level student at Basildon College, had complained of headaches, nausea and numbness in her legs during the party at her parent's home in Latchingdon, Essex, on 12 November.

The inquest at Chelmsford

heard she told her mother she had taken one ecstasy tablet and some drink before she collapsed.

She died in the intensive care unit at Broomfield Hospital, Chelmsford, after doctors declared her to be brain stem dead four days later. Her life support machine was switched off and she never recovered consciousness.

The coroner's officer, PC Derek Sewell, added that some good had come from her death. "Mr and Mrs Betts allowed her organs to be transplanted

and many people will benefit." The cause of death was given as ecstasy poisoning.

A police investigation into Leah's death is currently under way. Detectives trying to trace the pusher who sold her the fatal tablet have appealed for night-clubbers in Basildon to "shop" the dealer involved.

They have received more than 350 calls and puts and nightspots targeted include Racquel's where the teenager is thought to have obtained the fatal tablet.

Detective Chief Inspector

Brian Storey, leading the investigation, said: "Interesting information has come in about people who were at the Racquel's night club when the tablet was passed on."

The inquiry has seen the arrest of four young people who have been released on bail.

Meanwhile, a young woman from East Anglia who has received Leah's lungs and heart was said to be stable yesterday. She also donated her eyes, liver and pancreas.

Leah's funeral will be held at her village church next week.



Leah Betts: inquest told of ecstasy poisoning

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Someone Cares

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## international

Algeria looks ahead: President warned not to disregard fundamentalists after poll triumph

# Jailed Islamists demand their day in court

ROBERT FISK  
Algiers

A week ago – just as Algerians were going to the polls to elect Liamine Zeroual as president – Mostepha Bouchachi, lawyer at the Algerian supreme court and graduate of Southampton University, walked through the forbidding iron gates of the old French-built prison of Serkadji above Algiers to talk to a client.

In a rectangular room reserved for prison visits, Mr Bouchachi sat down opposite Abdel Kader Hashani, the third most important figure in the banned Islamic Salvation Front, the FIS. Hashani, who has been charged with calling for desertion among the armed forces, repeated what he has been telling his lawyer for three years: "Let the government put me on trial."

Mr Hashani is in solitary confinement but the authorities have allowed him a Koran and a transistor radio on which he listens – according to Mr Bouchachi – to the Arabic services of the BBC and the Voice of America. Bespectacled and invariably dressed in a grey *khamis* gown, he has written to President Zeroual, to the Algerian justice ministry, to his lawyer, always demanding to be taken to court.

"This kind of thing shouldn't happen in this century," Mr Bouchachi says. "Mr Hashani was a very peaceful man. He led the FIS to win the parliamentary elections in 1991. These elections were annulled by the authorities. A month later, Mr Hashani wrote a communiqué in which he said: 'I ask the armed forces to respect the constitution.' That is all he said. But two days later he was arrested – and has been in prison ever since."

The military-backed government took a somewhat different view of the Hashani statement. In the context of the cancelled elections, they regarded Hashani's call as an appeal to the army to support the FIS election victory and to stage a mutiny. But no trial followed. "He writes to us all the time, saying he wants to be judged," Mr Bouchachi says.

"The trouble is that the people in charge of this country don't want an independent justice system. The law was amended two years ago, giving more power to the minister of justice to suspend judges involved in certain cases."

Mr Bouchachi, as it turns out, is also the lawyer for Ali Belhadj, the second – but most popular – FIS leader, arrested before the FIS victory in the 1991 elections and subsequently sentenced to 12 years for sedition. "I am his lawyer but I haven't seen him for two years," Mr Bouchachi says.

Moved briefly to house arrest, Ali Belhadj and Abassi Madani, the FIS leader, held two series of negotiations with the government – a year ago and then again this spring. President Zeroual insisted that the FIS publicly renounce violence. The FIS demanded the unconditional liberation of prisoners, freedom of movement and association, and permission to operate as a political party. "When the government decided to suspend the negotiations, Mr Belhadj was moved to a prison in the south," Mr Bouchachi says. "But I have no permission to see him and I don't know where he is."

The issue that now faces President Zeroual is whether to free the FIS leaders after his election victory – on the grounds that they are no longer relevant – or whether to reopen negotiations because he is strong enough to compromise.

Sheikh Mahfoud Nahmah, the leader of the moderate Islamist Hamas party, who won 25 per cent of the votes last Thursday, had called for the closing of prison camps, the liberation of political prisoners and an amnesty for certain political crimes. The secular Kabyle leader, Said Sadi, believes that FIS supporters – unable to vote for their own representatives because their party is banned – gave their support to Mr Nahmah. "Fundamentalism is decreasing," Mr Sadi said after hearing that he had won 10 per cent of the vote. "The FIS voted for Hamas and 25 per cent was the best they could get – and that's not very much for a country as big as Algeria. The rea-

son the FIS didn't want these elections was because they knew they had reached their absolute maximum [in popularity] in 1991; they knew they couldn't do it again."

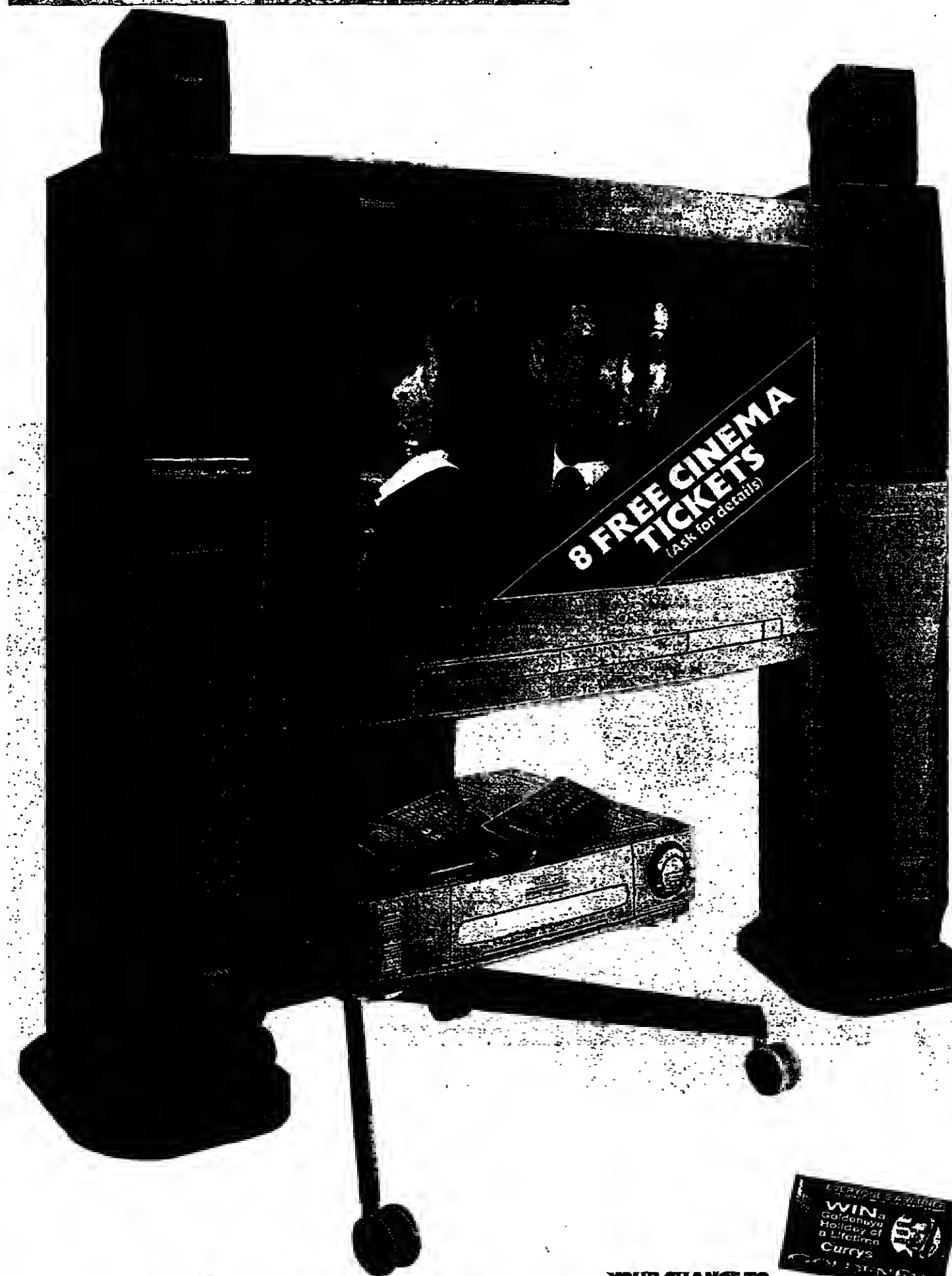
Algerian newspapers are this week filled with reports that Islamists are handing themselves over to the authorities, despairing of their future after 75 per cent of the electorate, according to official figures, disobeyed their call to boycott the presidential elections.

Mr Bouchachi disputes this thesis. "Sooner or later," he says, "the government will have to deal with the FIS. They cannot make the FIS disappear. It will not go away. For Zeroual to govern, he has to reach reconciliation with the FIS, the National Liberation Front and the Front of Socialist Forces. If he tries to create his own party and hold legislative elections under high security, this will lead his country to disaster."



Fallen to earth: The toppled pinnacle of a mosque minaret in Cairo. At least 10 people died when an earthquake, centred beneath the gulf of Aqaba, shook the Middle East from Lebanon to the borders of Sudan at dawn yesterday  
Photograph: Aladin Abdel Naby/Reuters

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### IN BRIEF

#### Tigers' last escape route from Jaffna cut

Colombo — Sri Lankan troops have cut off the last escape route for Tamil rebels who are defending the besieged city of Jaffna, writes Tim McGirk. A military spokesman in Colombo yesterday said that after a fierce attack in which 45 Tamil Tiger rebels were killed, government forces managed to capture the main supply road leading east out of Jaffna. The Tigers appeared to have retaliated, however: a military transport aircraft which crashed into the ocean off the Jaffna peninsula with 62 people on board was thought to have been shot down by the rebels.

#### Cash fails to appease French students

Paris — France unveiled a four-year plan to iron out inequalities in its overcrowded and understaffed universities by redistributing funds in favour of "poor" institutions, but angry students vowed to continue sit-ins and strikes to squeeze more funding out of the state. The Education Minister, Francois Bayrou, said an extra 200m francs (£26.4m) would be spent annually, a tenth of the sum demanded by the students. *Reuters*

#### Peres sworn in to seek peace

Jerusalem — Shimon Peres was sworn in as Israel's Prime Minister in succession to the assassinated Yitzhak Rabin after parliament voted 62-8, with 38 abstentions, to approve a government he pledged would be dedicated to peace. *Reuters*

#### Major wants Turkey closer to Europe

London — John Major, speaking after talks in London with his Turkish counterpart, Tansu Ciller, expressed Britain's support for Turkey's bid to form a customs union with the European Union and said he hoped the European Parliament would not block the deal, writes Tony Barber.

#### Bank chief pledges to guard rouble

Moscow — The Russian parliament overwhelmingly confirmed Sergei Dubinin, a reformist former acting finance minister, as the new head of the central bank. He immediately promised to keep monetary policy on track. *AP*

#### No offence over Chirac's cheap flat

Paris — The public prosecutor, Gabriel Bestard, said he had dropped an investigation into President Jacques Chirac over his low-rent city-owned flat "in the absence of any clear offence", lifting a political cloud over the French leader. *Reuters*

#### New president, same party, in Tanzania

Dar es Salaam — Benjamin Mkapa, of Tanzania's ruling Party for the Revolution, was declared President with 61.8 per cent of the vote. The party also won 186 seats in the new pluralist parliament, against 46 for the four main opposition parties. *Reuters*

#### Killer cured, then executed

Juliet, Illinois — George DelVecchio, a 47-year-old child-killer who underwent surgery earlier this month to relieve a heart condition, was executed by lethal injection early yesterday, prison authorities said. He underwent an angioplasty to clear a blocked artery after a heart attack late last month. *Reuters*

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Single currency: Commission accused of massaging figures

# EU view of French economy 'too rosy'

DIANE COYLE  
Economics Correspondent

The European Commission came under attack yesterday for issuing rosy economic forecasts that some economists said were intended to boost the idea that France could qualify for a single European currency.

The forecasts were published on the same day as a more cautious assessment by the European Monetary Institute, forerunner of the European Central Bank. The differences exemplify the emerging clash between France, heavily represented in the Commission, and Germany, influential in the Frankfurt-based EMI, over the prospects for a single currency.

In its half-yearly forecast, the Commission predicted that eight countries, including France, would bring their budget deficits below the limit set out in the Maastricht treaty by 1997, in time to qualify for monetary union two years later. "At the end of 1997, a significant number of countries will meet the conditions" for joining the currency union, said Yves-Thibault de Silguy, the French EU Finance Commissioner yesterday in Brussels.



Yves-Thibault de Silguy: Optimistic on deficits

But the monetary institute, in its first "convergence assessment", was much more downbeat.

The report said progress towards economic convergence was insufficient. "Public finances in most member states continue to be far from satisfactory," it said.

Economists in the City criticised the Commission as too optimistic. Stephen King, head of European economics at the brokers James Capel, said: "It is designed to deliver countries into satisfying the Maastricht criteria rather than reflect economic reality."

No country earned a glowing report from the EMI. But the institute's call for France to make more progress in cutting its budget deficit even after the social security reforms announced this month is politically sensitive. The EMI's convergence report said all member countries would have to take action to meet the deficit and debt criteria limits.

In another sign of rising tensions over the single currency, Germany pushed ahead with plans to ensure budget discipline is maintained after monetary union. Theo Waigel, the Finance Minister, said yesterday that European countries would work out by next year a "stability pact" to penalise countries whose deficits exceed the Maastricht target after the start of the single currency. He said French and Dutch ministers agreed.

But Mr de Silguy yesterday dismissed the idea of extra requirements. "There will be no supplementary conditions", he told a European Parliament committee. No national capital could dominate EMU discussions, he said, in a clear reference to Germany.

Only Germany, Ireland and Luxembourg already meet the

Maastricht requirement of a government deficit of less than 3 per cent of GDP. Germany's deficit, at 2.9 per cent, was sending a warning signal, according to the EMI, while Ireland's outstanding government debt was too high. Ten countries satisfy the inflation and interest rate requirements.

The European Commission's outlook for the next two years had a much more optimistic flavour. Although it has cut its forecasts for economic growth, the Commission predicts almost as strong an expansion next year.

It forecasts GDP growth of 2.7 per cent in the EU this year, 2.6 per cent in 1996 and 2.9 per cent in 1997. This strong growth of GDP allows it to predict that six countries will meet the Maastricht deficit requirement next year, up from three, with eight qualifying in 1997. The forecasts incorporate the recent French budget plans, but not the tax reforms due to be announced in the next two weeks.

Mr de Silguy said yesterday there must be no doubts about governments' resolve to cut deficits. Any uncertainty could generate a "self-reinforcing spiral of weak sentiment".



Pilgrims from the past: A group of Massachusetts people wading ashore in costume yesterday to mark the 375th anniversary of the Pilgrim Fathers' first landing, at Provincetown. Photograph: Jon Hamill/AP

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## New Peking ploy shocks Hong Kong

STEPHEN VINES  
Hong Kong

Hong Kong's Governor, Chris Patten, and politicians of all factions reacted with shock and anger yesterday to the disclosure of a Chinese plan to set up a shadow government and legislature six months before the end of British rule in 1997.

China has said already that it will dismantle the current legislature once it takes power and has threatened to abolish human rights laws it dislikes. However, Peking officials have been careful never to suggest the establishment of Chinese institutions before the transfer of power. The new plan was revealed in a speech on Tuesday night by Sir Sze-yuen Chung, 78. He was previously the senior non-government adviser to the Governor but is now a key adviser to Peking on Hong Kong, and is talked of as leader of the first administration under Chinese sovereignty.

Sir Sze-yuen candidly stated: "It is inevitable that a shadow government will appear prior to the transfer of power." He said "a few hundred staff" would be employed in a provisional government secretariat. He admitted no legal basis had been laid for a parallel legislature but said the National People's Congress, China's parliament, could easily pass such legislation.

Mr Patten, visibly angered, made it clear yesterday that "there will be only one government in Hong Kong before 1 July 1997". He emphasised that the current administration was prepared to co-operate with the incoming government "but we certainly won't be prepared to consider anything which could lead to divided loyalties among civil servants or result in confusion or in eroding the effectiveness of government as a whole".

Manin Lee, leader of Hong Kong's largest political party, the Democratic Party, said: "Of all the proposals from China this

is the real shocker. Frankly, I cannot see how it can work."

Less predictable opposition came from Chan Yuen-ban, a legislator representing the Peking-backed Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong. Allen Lee, leader of the Liberal Party, an adviser to the Chinese government, said the proposals were "not in the interests of Hong Kong people".

Sir Sze-yuen also outlined a method by which China could have the head of the new administration chosen without an election. The mini-constitution for the new Hong Kong says that the choice should be made by a 400-strong election committee, but Sir Sze-yuen said too-way existed for a less cumbersome process.

He said that in the six-month overlapping period the parallel legislature would establish procedures to appoint the Chief Justice and court of final appeal, abolish laws which are viewed as contradicting the mini-constitution and adopt a budget for the coming year. All discussions between Britain and China have been based on the assumption that the budget of the outgoing colonial administration would remain in place for the rest of the financial year. It had also been assumed that judicial appointments would be made before 1997 and remain in place afterwards.

One of the few public figures to support the proposals was the pro-China trade unionist Tam Yiu-chung. He said a shadow government was "inevitable during a transfer of power" and nothing to worry about. "We need to start working and not wait until the handover".

In the past 12 months China has been increasingly assertive about what it wants to do in Hong Kong after 1997. Past attempts to win the hearts and minds of Hong Kong people appear to have been abandoned in favour of making it clear where the new power lies.

## Spies keep a Goldeneye open in any language

MICHAEL SHERIDAN  
Diplomatic Editor

For those in Whitehall who maintain that gentlemen do not spy on their friends, the advertisement from the Government Communications Headquarters (GCHQ) this week rather gives the game away.

The eavesdroppers say they are looking for linguists "at the front line of intelligence translating, transcribing and analysing information".

So far, so routine. But the list of languages in which GCHQ seeks recruits gives the strong impression that its business involves much more than keeping an eye on potential baddies who concoct their fiendish plots in Arabic, Chinese or Persian. GCHQ,

it transpires, is just as interested in graduates who speak Japanese, or Portuguese, or Italian, or, for heaven's sake, Dutch.

Well, in case it had escaped anyone's notice in Whitehall, we have not been at war with Japan since 1945. Portugal is our oldest ally. The Italians are not thought to have any secrets to keep. And the Dutch? Perhaps the secrets of running a sound economy despite a vanished empire are thought to be a prize beyond compare.

There are also vacancies for Spanish and German speakers, but those can be explained in two words (1) Argentina and (2) Suspicion. And linguists expert in "any rare language of potential interest to the department" are also invited to apply.



## PEACE IN THE BALKANS

# Nothing in it for us, Bosnian Serbs complain

TONY BARBER  
Europe Editor

The Bosnian peace plan ran into immediate trouble yesterday when a senior Bosnian Serb official denounced it as a mistake and sceptical noises were also heard from the Muslim and Croat camps. "What has been done is an especially big mistake," said Momcilo Krajisnik, the speaker of the Bosnian Serb assembly, who refused to attend Tuesday's ceremony in Dayton, Ohio, where the agreement was initiated.

The top two Bosnian Serb leaders, Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, maintained a public silence on the settlement, but it appeared likely that Mr Krajisnik and other militant Bosnian Serb nationalists would call the assembly into session to reject the accord. Western diplomats played down Mr Krajisnik's hostility to the deal, saying they were relying on Serbia's President, Slobodan Milosevic, to ensure compliance from the Bosnian Serbs.

Mr Milosevic had full powers to negotiate for the Bosnian Serbs in Ohio, a point graphically illustrated by Mr Krajisnik when he said that the Bosnian Serb representatives at the talks had not even seen the final maps showing the division

of Bosnia until 10 minutes before the initialing ceremony. The Bosnian Serbs complain that the deal leaves them with a militarily vulnerable, economically unviable and politically isolated mini-state.

Croatia's President, Franjo Tudjman, returning to Zagreb from Dayton, described the settlement as good for his country, but some parts of the

## Nobel nomination

Belgrade (Reuters) - Supporters of Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic said yesterday they would nominate him for the Nobel Peace Prize for his role in the peace agreement. There was no mention of calls abroad for Mr Milosevic to be prosecuted as a war criminal.

state-supervised media were conspicuously restrained in their enthusiasm. The newspaper Vjesnik said the US negotiators who brokered the peace had failed to understand that "the only thing important to Milosevic was territory and to some extent the lifting of United Nations sanctions".

Bosnia's Muslim President, Alija Izetbegovic, said he was pleased that the agreement

would bring peace but added that he was dissatisfied with the failure to resolve a territorial dispute around the town of Brcko in northern Bosnia. He also said he had achieved only 80 to 90 per cent of what he wanted for Sarajevo, which is to become a unified, open city under the accord.

Western governments, aware that the agreement needs to be implemented quickly if it is to succeed, are gearing up to send 60,000 Nato troops, including 20,000 Americans, to Bosnia to supervise it. British officials said yesterday they expected Britain to contribute about 15,000 soldiers, up from the present number of about 8,000 serving with UN forces in former Yugoslavia.

After the settlement is signed in Paris in early December, foreign ministers from around the world will meet in London on 8 and 9 December to work out the precise details of how to implement it. Meanwhile, Germany will host a conference in Bonn to put together a comprehensive arms control regime for former Yugoslavia.

However, the atmosphere of constructive Western co-operation was poisoned somewhat yesterday when the French government refused to praise the US mediating efforts in Ohio,



Bringer of peace: President Alija Izetbegovic greeted by a guard of honour on his return to Sarajevo from Ohio. Photograph: Danilo Krstanovic/Reuters

preferring instead to criticise US policies in the Balkans since 1991. "The fact of the matter is that the Americans looked at this former Yugoslavia business from a great distance for nearly four years and basically they obstructed developments," said the Foreign Minister, Hervé de Charette.

The Prime Minister, Alain

Juppé, observed sniftily that the US plan accepted in Ohio "looks like a twin of the European plan presented 18 months ago". The ministers' remarks appeared to reflect frustration that the European Union had been unable to forge a peace settlement for Bosnia and in the end was sidelined as US diplomats took over.

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## White House rallies support for mission

RUPERT CORNWELL  
Washington

The White House is considering extending President Bill Clinton's trip to Europe next week to include a visit to US troops preparing to go to Bosnia, with the aim of rallying support from a sceptical Congress and public.

In practice, little doubt exists that, one way or another, US troops will go to Bosnia. History shows that in committing US forces abroad, a president as commander-in-chief invariably

has his way, and that at least until serious mishaps, public opinion will rally behind him.

Even so, the Administration is acutely aware that for a mission as potentially risky as Bosnia, some kind of Congressional approval would provide vital political cover should things go wrong.

As soon as the Thanksgiving holiday, which begins today, is over, the Administration will start to make its case in earnest on Capitol Hill, while officials say Mr Clinton will make a televised address to the country

shortly to explain why America's national interest demands the presence of 20,000 American troops in Bosnia.

In the meantime, some modification seems inevitable to the visit, which takes Mr Clinton to London, Belfast, Dublin and finally Madrid - most probably the addition of a stop in Germany. There Mr Clinton would meet the First Armoured Division, backbone of the future US peace-keeping force.

But yesterday, just hours after the initialing ceremony in Dayton, Ohio, Mr Clinton's se-

nior advisers were already hard at work on the talk shows, from the Vice-President, Al Gore, who described the risks of the mission as "minimal", and in any case vastly less than those of staying out, to Richard Holbrooke, the Assistant Secretary of State whose relentless negotiating was largely responsible for the accord.

If the three rivals violated the Dayton deal before deployment started, Mr Holbrooke told NBC's Today programme, "then we're not going to go". Bosnia would not be a repeat of Viet-

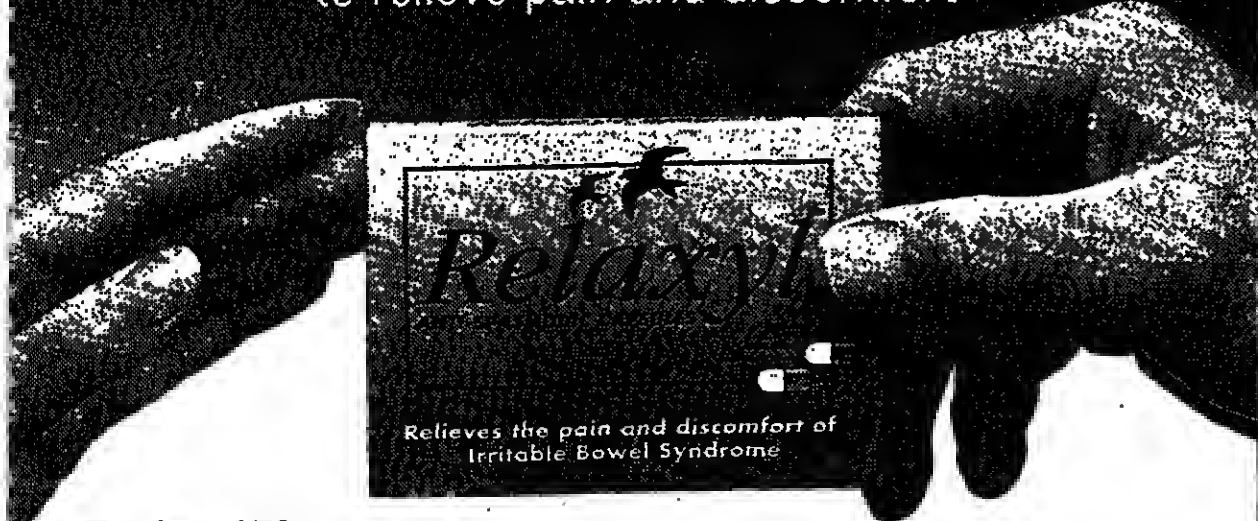
nam, nor of Somalia in 1993, when a UN humanitarian mission turned into a US-led hunt for a Somali warlord. "It's not Somalia, it's not Vietnam, they're not going in unless they have very tight guarantees."

Much depends on whether Bosnia can be kept separate from the struggle between Congress and the White House over the budget, which will be played out in parallel over the next month. If feelings run as high as they did when the government was shut down earlier this week, entanglement of the two seems certain.

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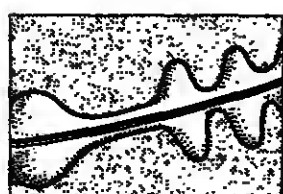
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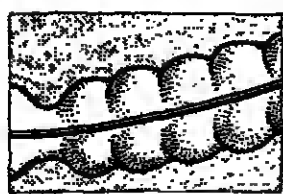
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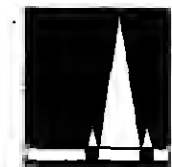
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## PEACE IN THE BALKANS

## Dayton deal holds seeds of own destruction

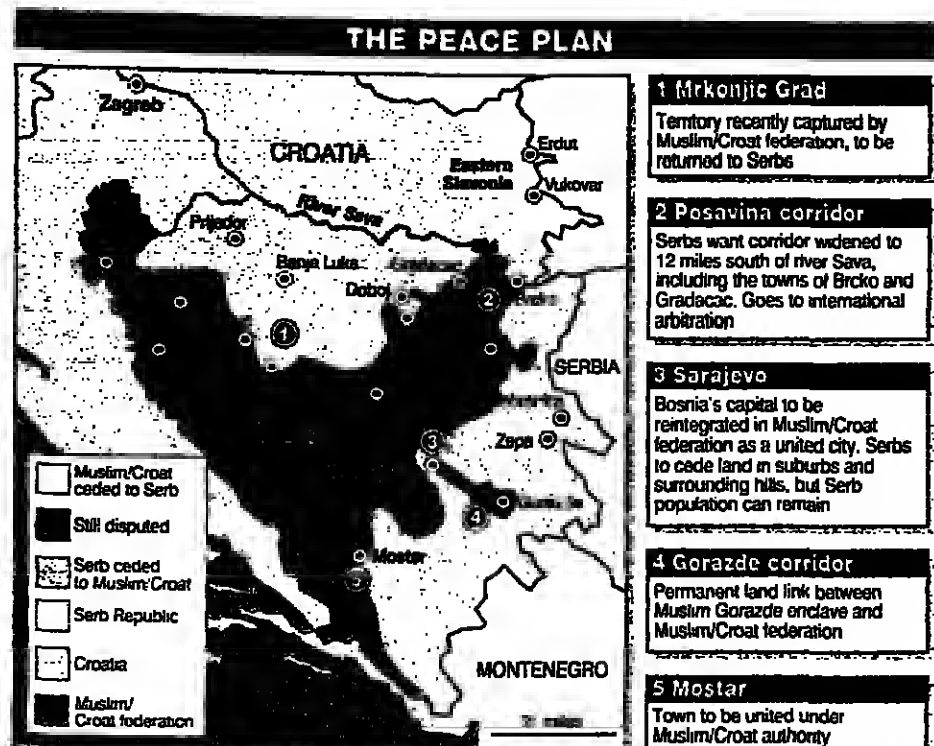
**The terms:** For all its high ideals, the settlement rewards ethnic cleansing

TONY BARBER  
Europe Editor

The Bosnian peace agreement represents a brave attempt to assert fundamental Western values in the Balkans after a war in which combatants on all sides treated those values with contempt. The settlement aims to protect human rights, ensure free elections and defend the principle that borders cannot be changed by force, yet it is founded on a division of territory that implicitly recognises that the war's ugliest consequences are unlikely to be reversed.

The central feature of the agreement is that Bosnia remains a united state in its pre-war borders, but is split between a Muslim-Croat federation with 51 per cent of the land and a Bosnian Serb republic with 49 per cent. Sarajevo, which the Serbs wanted in partition, will stay united in the Muslim-Croat federation with freedom of movement for all nationalities. The agreement awards the federation the eastern Muslim enclave of Gorazde, which is to be linked to the federation by a narrow corridor. But all other towns in eastern Bosnia from which Serb forces expelled Muslims from April 1992 onwards are allocated to the Bosnian Serb republic.

One issue was not settled at Dayton, Ohio, and will be decided by international arbitration within a year. This concerns the Serb demand for a wider corridor near the northern town of Brcko to connect Serb possessions in west and eastern Bosnia. The Bosnian government wanted access to the Sava



river, which runs along the Bosnian-Croatian border in the disputed area, while the Croats were outraged at suggestions that they should sacrifice the historically Croat region of Posavina to accommodate the Serbs. The issue almost torpedoed the Ohio negotiations.

Central Bosnian government institutions will include a presidency, a two-chamber legislature, a constitutional court and a central bank. The government will be responsible for foreign policy, foreign trade, monetary policy and immigration.

However, the Muslim-Croat and Serb zones will have their own presidencies, legislatures and – crucially – armies. It is open to doubt whether Bosnia's federal institutions will stamp their authority on the two sub-states. The agreement envisages free elections to the legislature and presidency as well as to those of the Muslim-Croat and Serb entities within six to nine months. Refugees will have the right to vote in their original place of residence, but it is not clear how they will be helped to exercise this right.

People charged with war crimes by the United Nations are barred from holding office. This would include Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb leaders, and Dario Kordic and General Tihomir Blaskic, two senior Bosnian Croat leaders.

Nato forces implementing the peace agreement will have the authority to arrest indicted war criminals if they encounter them, but will not be given the task of tracking them down. The peace deal requires the governments of Serbia, Croatia,

Bosnia and the two Bosnian entities to co-operate with the UN tribunal.

In Serbia's case, UN sanctions will not be fully lifted until such co-operation is forthcoming and Belgrade addresses other concerns, notably the treatment of the ethnic Albanian majority in the southern province of Kosovo. This means Serbia will be denied access to international financial institutions and refused readmission to other organisations.

The settlement creates a Commission on Human Rights with an internationally appointed ombudsman and a Human Rights Chamber to hear cases brought by Bosnian citizens. It says the chamber will have the authority to order the Muslim-Croat federation and the Serb republic to stop abuses, but does not explain how the chamber can ensure compliance with its instructions.

Bosnia's 2 million or more refugees are assured of their right to return home or obtain "just compensation" for their losses. However, this clause may be a dead letter, as it is hard to imagine victims of "ethnic cleansing", such as the Muslims of northern and eastern Bosnia, returning to areas where their tormentors now rule the roost.

The agreement envisages a phased lifting of the UN arms embargo on former Yugoslavia, with the combatants barred from acquiring tanks, heavy artillery, mines, military aircraft and attack helicopters for 180 days. How such limits can be enforced when the UN embargo was broken with great ease during the war is not explained.



Students greet President Izetbegovic on his return to Sarajevo

Photograph: AP

## Serbians' fighting talk lays siege to the symbolism of Sarajevo

EMMA DALY  
Sarajevo

The Dayton agreement is supposed to restore the physical unity of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in particular of Sarajevo. But the most significant and symbolic issue of the peace negotiations will almost certainly be the hardest to enact on the ground.

Sarajevo, promised Warren Christopher, the US Secretary

of State, "will be unified. Check-points and closed bridges will no longer divide the families of that city."

Under the deal agreed this week, the Bosnian government will assume control of Ilidza, Grbavica, Pijasci, Vogosca and Hadzici, roughly north and west of Sarajevo and the heartland of the siege waged against the city.

Residents have a different idea. "Ilidza will never be Mus-

lim," Dragan, a Bosnian Serb policeman, said fiercely. "Too many people have died." Milenko Djukic, a civilian who fled his home in Sarajevo in February 1993, agreed. "It has always been Serb and it will always remain. Many people have been killed here, many young men, and we cannot leave their graves."

No one seems sure how "I-For" (the Nato Implementation Force) is to persuade such cit-

izens otherwise, nor even of how strong a level of control the government side is supposed to exercise over its new Serb dominions.

Are French or American soldiers to persuade the Serbs to surrender their weapons and accept a new life in harmony with their neighbours, albeit at the point of a gun? Or will the world settle for nominal political control, perhaps securing main roads out for local traffic

but opting to go extremely slowly on the return of refugees from Sarajevo to its Serb-held suburbs and vice versa?

A peaceful reintegration may mean that the huge majority of Serbs leave rather than live under government rule.

At present, Sarajevans from the government side can drive through Ilidza with a UN escort; a few (mostly women, children and the elderly) from both sides can, if they have completed

a bureaucratic maze, cross the Bridge of Brotherhood and Unity linking Grbavica to the city centre. Travel restrictions may ease – under the watchful eyes of the peace-keepers.

But how to build sufficient trust to enable freer movement? Most residents on the government side say they want to live with "good" Serbs, those who have committed no war crimes. In Ilidza, such distinctions are dismissed. "What will

they think of me?" asked Dragan. "I have been in Ilidza since the start of the war defending my home. Will I be a 'good' Serb or a 'bad' one? Who will judge?"

Among the Serbs interviewed close to the front line there was no desire to share anything with Muslims or Croats. "Sarajevo must be divided into a Serb part and a Muslim part, with nothing for the Croats," Mr Djukic said.

Clearly, some of the anguish and hostility stems from an acknowledgement that the Bosnian Serbs have watched victory slip from their grasp; like their enemies on the government side, they complain of an "unjust peace". Only the people of Bosnia – and their politicians – can create a *modus vivendi*; I-For has the unenviable task of ensuring that the sense of defeat does not spawn actions of suicidal revenge.

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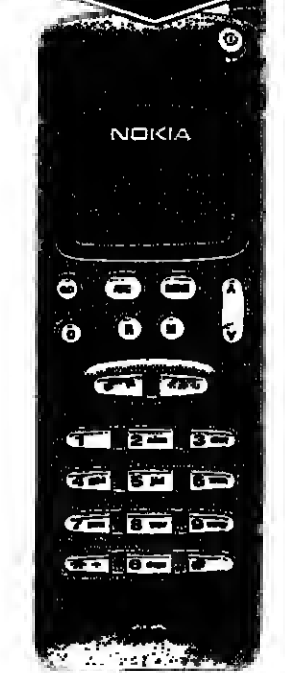
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## Natural horsemanship

Photographic Sport &amp; General

**Genevieve Murphy**

Dolf Polak

**Anne Cole**  
**Robert James Brocklehurst**, physiologist: born Liverpool 16 September 1899; Radcliffe Travelling Fellow, Dept of Physiology and Biochemistry, University College London 1926-28, Lecturer 1928-29, Senior Lecturer 1929-30; Professor of Physiology, Bristol University 1930-65 (Emeritus), Dean of the Faculty of Medicine 1934-47; married 1928 Sybille Risk (died 1968, two sons, one daughter), 1970 Dora Waits (died 1986); died Plymouth 21 October 1995.

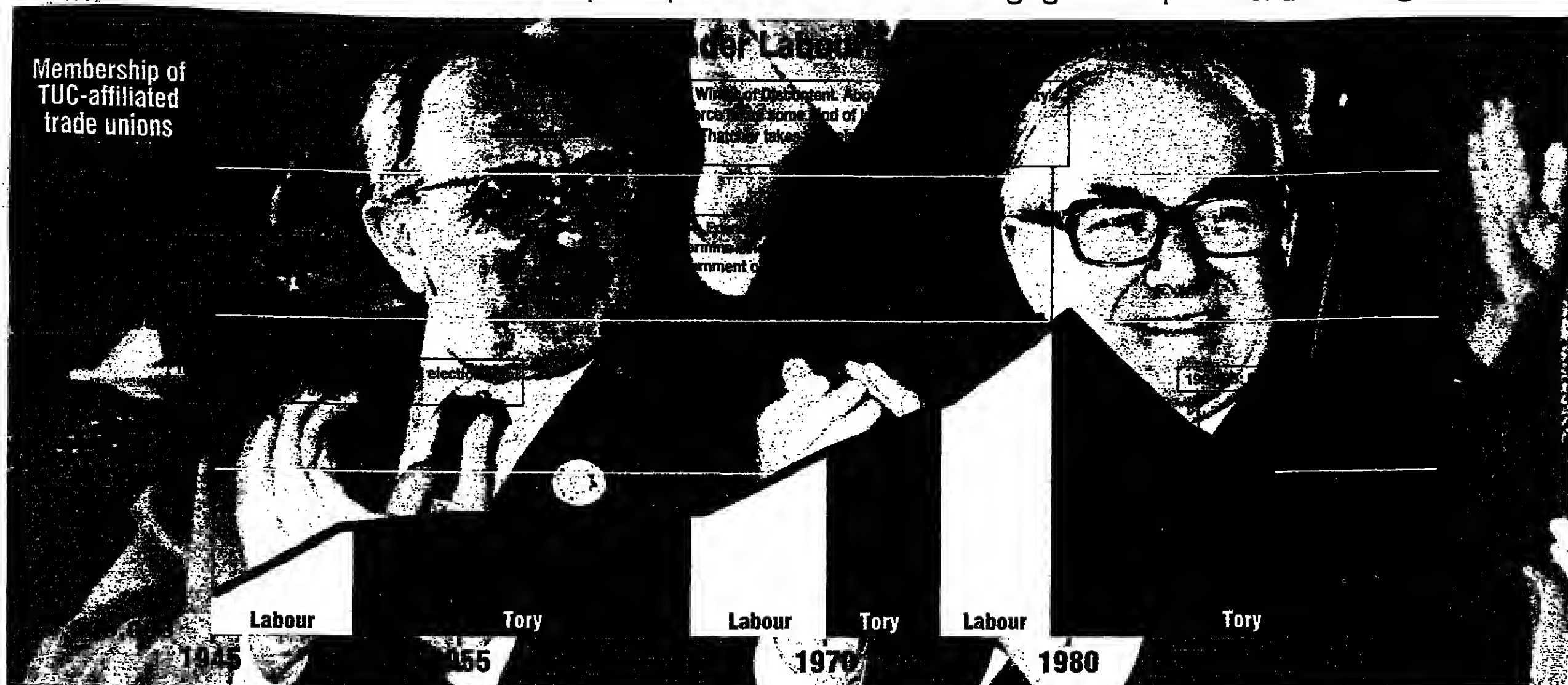
## 23 November 1995

**Ying Hui Tan, Barrister**

**Ying Hui Tan Barrister**



John Rentoul and Barrie Clement on the pent-up frustrations that are emerging in anticipation of a Labour government



## Quietly, the unions flex their muscles

"It's like hanging your head against a brick wall. It feels good when you stop. We haven't stopped yet, but it's beginning to feel better already." So says a trade union policymaker, sensing the advent of a Labour government in 18 months' time. Union membership has halved since the peak in the Seventies, but union leaders feel that they have survived Thatcherism and are – in private – more upbeat about the future than at any time since the 1978/79 Winter of Discontent.

We are not, of course, heading back to an age when union barons ruled at the court of 10 Downing Street. And there is little prospect of a sudden upsurge of union militancy – as the receding of the threat of strike action at Ford and Vauxhall proved yesterday. Union leaders do not doubt that it would be different next time. The leaders of the three largest unions, Rodney Bickerstaffe, John Edmonds and Bill Morris, do not expect – as the Scanlons, Basnetts and Joneses of the Seventies did – to be deciding a Labour government's economic policy. But they do feel that they are coming in from the cold. Beer and sandwiches at Downing Street would be

"nice, but not necessary", according to one union leader. Behind the careful words about being "accepted as a legitimate part of British public life", one senses a tingling of anticipation at the thought of once again being powers in the land.

So what do union leaders expect of a Labour government, and how would Prime

**Union barons are bruised by their exclusion from the Labour leadership's inner counsels**

Minister Blair and Chancellor Brown treat them? There are several routes back to influence for the unions that do not lead directly through the door of Number 10. If there is a Labour government, there will be some apparently low-key but highly significant changes in the legal framework under which unions operate. Tony Blair has made absolutely clear that there will be no going back on the main

Conservative union law reforms – and few union leaders want him to. But there would be a new law requiring employers to recognise unions where the majority of the workforce want it. That means that companies such as Marks & Spencer – along with less beneficent organisations – would be forced to recognise a union. This means a great deal to the unions' ability to recruit and to gain leverage.

In addition, workers have been promised the right not to be sacked for going on strike. This has been denounced by the Tories as a "striker's charter", although in practice it amounts only to the right to compensation for unfair dismissal. But both measures will tilt the balance of power in industrial relations modestly back in favour of unions against employers.

More important, perhaps, would be Britain's signing up to the European Social Charter. This would give unions a role in framing European legislation. The parental leave directive, for example, which will give new parents in other EU countries the right to 12 weeks' unpaid leave, was agreed by European employers and unions without directly involving governments.

Blair's speech to the CBI earlier this month was curious in this respect. He insisted a Labour government would not accept each and every proposal from Brussels. But the point about opting into the Social Charter is that it would remove Britain's veto over proposed Euro-law.

It was an example of Blair failing to "say what we mean and mean what we say", because to union and Labour Party audiences the unequivocal commitment to the Social Charter is a big crowd-pleaser. TUC sources politely say they were "puzzled". But this is only the latest incident in the edgy relationship – between the unions and the Labour leadership. Union barons are bruised and smarting from their exclusion from the Labour leadership's inner counsels since Blair became leader.

Bill Morris, of the once-mighty Transport and General Workers' Union, for example, has not forgiven Blair for the unidentified "aide" who described him as "confused, muddled and pusillanimous" on the question of Clause IV and public ownership – or for the challenge for his job from Jack Dromey, Blair's closest ally in the union. Yesterday he told the

*Independent*: "I am looking forward to a constructive relationship with a Labour government in which we can work as partners in tackling the problems facing the British economy, in particular cutting unemployment and launching an assault on poverty."

This says nothing, of course, about the issues that could lead to conflict. Blair has already been warned privately by union leaders that his first problem might occur in the public sector and in particular from the 1.6 million workers in local government.

Senior officials of the Union public service union recently sat down to a meal with the Labour leader to warn him about possible difficulties over pay. "They don't seem to have a policy towards public sector pay. I think they ought to start thinking about one," a Unison official said.

The scene has already been set. Local council unions will submit a claim next month that would add more than 3 per cent to the total pay bill.

Assuming the claim is crushed, the same aspirations would emerge 12 months later at a time when a Labour government could be about to take power. Which is

why it is so significant that the council workers' claim will probably include an attempt to set a "minimum wage" for council workers. The claim could well mention a figure of £4.15 an hour, which was – coincidentally – what the unions wanted Labour's national minimum wage to be. It would mean a rise of 12 per cent for the lowest-paid council workers, currently on £3.71 an hour.

The unions' claim links two issues on which a Labour government would face a tidal wave of high expectations – workers in the public sector will expect to "catch up" after 16 years of Tory austerity, and activists in the unions and in the Labour Party will expect Morris's dramatic "assault on poverty".

The pressures on a Labour government were illustrated by John Monks, the TUC leader, commenting on Gordon Brown's tax-cutting plans last weekend. "Our emphasis is rather different than Gordon's. Rather than tax cuts, the emphasis should be on increasing spending on the areas that need it most – the long-term unemployed, those who need homes and also the transport system," he said in a television interview. And Monks is an unrepentant moderniser.

Blair and Brown have consistently tried to lower expectations – in private meetings with union leaders as well as in public. But they have said little about how they would deal with upward pressures on wages. Apart from the weight of expectations in the public sector, the private sector will see stronger unions, a mini-

**A Blair-led government would face a tidal wave of high expectations**

mum wage and – possibly – lower unemployment.

This raises the issue that Dare Not Speak Its Name – an incomes policy. This is the lesson of the Australian experience, which is highly influential with Blair. The Australian Labor Party has now won five elections in a row, and one of the key elements of its successful economic management has been the Social Contract

between government, employers and unions.

The only move in this direction the Labour leadership have made is the plan to set up a Low Pay Commission, in which those same three parties will set the level of the minimum wage. Could this be the first institution of a New Corporate State?

We do not know, because only the free-thinking and outspoken Labour frontbencher Jeff Rooker has urged a debate about incomes policy. He pointed out that a minimum wage, by pushing up the earnings of the lowest paid, would put pressure on differentials further up the scale.

It is not at all clear how much either side has thought about these questions. Blair and Brown want to avoid any suggestion of a return to the discredited norms and contracts of the Seventies. And union leaders will not express their cautious optimism in public, because they know anything that looks like flexing muscles would hurt Labour's chances. But Blair cannot insulate a Labour government from the conflicts of the labour market, which means that his unwillingness to discuss the tensions ahead could spell trouble.

## Diary

JOHN WALSH



The fevered speculation is over at last. I can reveal, exclusively, that the winner of this year's Bad Sex Prize – the *Literary Review's* annual award for the most allegedly risible piece of descriptive writing about sex – goes to my chum Philip Kerr. For a spectacular effort in the middle of his new novel, *Gridiron*, soon to be filmed by Working Title. How rude is it? Mr Kerr, formerly an enthusiastic ladies' man, now happily married, kindly reads me the offending passage. After some foreplay involving a lady's knickers (described as "a little Sicilian bomber of black silk", which I think is awfully good), Kerr continues: "Quickly he threw off his own clothes and rolled on top of her. Detaching mind from over-eager gnomon and its exquisitely appointed shadowy task, he began to make love to her..."

What could anyone object to about that? "I think it's the word gnomon," says Kerr suspiciously. "It means the bit that sticks up from a sundial and casts a shadow. Perhaps Bron [Waugh] and Co object to someone using words they don't understand."



The sun has got his gnomon



Hughes: Downing Street complaint

The evening after the Princess of Wales's spectacular (if over-rehearsed) confession, I found myself in Downing Street. Not, you'll be surprised to learn, briefing the Cabinet on the constitutional position *vis-à-vis* the royal succession, but at No 11, at a party for the Arvon Foundation, of which the Chancellor's wife is just one of numerous starry mates. Lords Jenkins and Gower, Jung Chang and Doris Lessing, Maurice Saatchi and Josephine Hart processed up the Exchequer-minder's staircase under the stern gaze of Pitt, Palmerston, Disraeli and Stanley Baldwin, arrayed on the pink silk wallpaper. Ted Hughes complained about the deadening effect of universities on the creative temperament and Patricia Hodge read a poem. It was, of course, a money-raising venture; they're looking for £1m to subsidise courses for teachers, to invigorate them with a passion for teaching the craft of writing.

I myself had a modest success in Arvon circles a few years ago, when I tutored a throng of 16 mutinous students in "Creative Journalism" down in Tottleigh Barton, a Hardy-esque bothy in the middle of hayseed Devon, where you were thought lucky if you had the Second Pigsty to sleep in and the students took turns in cooking cataclysmic lentil dishes for all to share. At the

time, it cost £100 for five days' board, lodging and creative peace and quiet. Now it's £260, a farcically small price for such a treat. My only regret is that they don't do Creative Journalism any more. Sounds a bit too close to "Lies", I suppose.

What do you call a gathering of cartoonists? A strip? A punch line? A friend spotted a convention of gagsters on the Eurostar as it thundered home from Paris on Monday afternoon. Arrayed on the table before the artists were several rapidly emptying bottles of French Trappist beer, a uniquely sticky brew that plays hell with your clothes. As the train thundered across the ashen-flavoured meadows, the genital band drank and joked and everything was right with the world. Then they hit the tunnel and a minute later, without warning or ceremony, the train screeched in an emergency halt. Lights flickered out, bottles flew and a tidal wave of Trappist beer landed all over Nick Newman (*Sunday Times*, Private Eye). When the lights came on again he was a sodden mess, wailing "I'm completely drenched!"

The neurotic French tourists and stoic Brits in the carriage laughed nervously. (Why had the bloody thing stopped?) That was when David Austin (*Guardian*, Private Eye) decided to capitalise on the lightness of atmosphere. "Not half as drenched as you're about to be," he bantered, indicating the ceiling, above which lurked 150 feet of seawater.

A score of heads swivelled upwards. Hearts missed beats. Pulse rates soared. Embolisms raced hither and thither. The carriage fell as silent as Davy Jones's Locker.

Marvellous chap for cheering you up, the professional humorist.

Call for Miss Marple! Agatha Christie's homely solver of provincial whodunnits would, I've always thought, have had a fine time in Hampstead, where white-collar crime and poison-pen letters are a familiar part of the diurnal round. But what would she make of the news that Fay Weldon, the superstar novelist, was burgled the other day? And that the

only thing the miscreants seemed to take was a file containing all her correspondence with her former agent, Giles Gordon, discussing contractual arrangements for books recent and forthcoming?

"We updated the filing system only recently, so there's no question about it," says Ms Weldon, who called in the police. "It's very peculiar". Mr Gordon, who until recently represented such classy scribes as Peter Ackroyd, Sue Townsend and the Prince of Wales but has now moved up to Scotland, was not around to comment on his new status as sought-after letter-writer. Can it be possible that Ms Weldon's records of her agent's endeavours on her behalf have touched the heart of a devoted, if misguided, reader, and that he has decided to purloin these worthless documents for his own (and posterity's) use? It's the only explanation I can think of.

"We didn't set out to discredit the Duke of Windsor," explained the producer of *Edward VIII: The Traitor King* on Greater London Radio yesterday morning. "Why would we want to do a thing like that?" A hard question to answer, although the words "Because it would make a good telly programme" occur to me.

What, though, did it remind me of? Ah yes, the Princess of Wales, when answering the biggest question of all on Monday. "Once or twice I've heard people say to me, you know, 'Diana's out to destroy the monarchy', which has bewildered me, because why would I want to destroy something that is my children's future?" Another good question, to which there are at least a dozen incendiary replies.

And that, in turn, reminded me of someone else: Michael Jackson, who, when interviewed by Oprah Winfrey two years ago, answered every difficult question the same way. "Did I buy the bones of the Elephant Man? No! Why would I want to do that?" "Do I sleep in a coffin? Naw! Why would I...?"

You get the idea. The rhetorical question – a sure sign that its user is hiding something – is well and truly flourishing.

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## The lessons of Cromwell Street

Over a period of nearly 30 years Fred West was killing women and children. For most of that time his wife, Rosemary, aided and abetted him. Most of us cannot come to terms with how terrible the last minutes of Rosemary West's 10 victims must have been, how appalling is the suffering of their families. So the personalities and tragedies – even the names – of these victims will recede from public consciousness, to be replaced by the legend.

But in the here and now, there are some serious questions to be asked. How could so many murders have taken place over such a long period of time without anyone blowing the whistle? How is it possible that the police and social services could have seen Frederick West on, it is believed, no fewer than 60 separate occasions, without intervening more decisively?

Some will argue that these were different times. The attitudes that prevailed when most of the killings took place made the discovery of the terrible crimes of Midland Road and Cromwell Street less likely. The extraordinary failure to prosecute the Wests for the rape of Caroline Owens in 1973 – and their subsequent £50 fine for sexual assault – was partially a product of the police fear of how rape cases were then dealt with. They felt that Ms Owens would be seen as somehow asking for it. An opportunity to take decisive action against the Wests was thereby squandered.

As the Bridge Case Consulting Service report into the deaths of Charmaine and Heather West makes clear, there were appalling failures of co-ordination and watchfulness by social services, police, schools and hospitals. Neither the police nor the courts informed social services about the Owens case. The schools were slow in noticing signs of abuse and desultory in following them up. The health service treated a 15-year-old girl for an ectopic pregnancy and gonorrhoea, without informing social services. Meanwhile the body count rose. As late as 1989 the

NSPCC failed to act on the case of one of the West boys who had been hit with a mallet. Subsequently the file "went missing". Since the period when most of the West murders took place, other cases have forced a change of attitude and policy on the authorities. The Maria Colwell case in 1973 led to a much more proactive approach on the part of social workers towards cases of child abuse; the Butler-Sloss report into the Cleveland cases in 1988 established the need for far better inter-service co-ordination. In all there have been more than 20 inquiries into the handling of child abuse cases in the past two decades. In addition the attitudes of the courts towards sexual assault and rape have hardened considerably since the early Seventies. Police and public have become sensitised to the issue of how children are treated, and far more aware of their own responsibilities.

These changes, however, do not mean that all is now well. Far from it. Each time a case has been investigated we have learnt something – especially when that investigation has been independent and public. So in the West case we now need just such an inquiry, which – unlike the Bridge report – will cover the failure of the police force and be completely independent.

Of course we must remember just how unique the Wests were. Ill-educated and inarticulate they may have been, but when it came to spotting and exploiting vulnerability they were geniuses. The abductor from the children's home, the troubled foster-child, the lesbian teenager – all were grist to the Wests' mill. Operating their conscienceless double act, they were also adept at convincing those around them that what appeared abnormal was, in fact, perfectly normal.

But their uniqueness does not absolve us from the responsibility of discovering everything that we possibly can, in order to ensure that no one else dies simply because we failed to put two and two together.

## From Di-vorce to Di-plomacy

With a flash of those lashes, she was off. Dynamic Diana has flown to Buenos Aires, leaving the country breathless behind her, still gossiping, speculating and arguing about that interview. With – of course – impeccable timing, her discussion of the ambassadorial role she hopes to play in future set the scene nicely for her first solo international mission: a trip to Argentina.

We have come a long way from "Gothica" – the Sun's headline on the day British troops sank the Argentine ship *Belgrano*. Thirteen years after Britain and Argentina went to war over the Falklands, relations between the two countries have gradually been restored through careful diplomacy. Prime Minister John Major and President Carlos Menem met in New York last month. And in September, the two countries signed a joint agreement on oil exploration in the Falkland waters.

The oil agreement exemplifies the *realpolitik* both countries are now pursuing. Neither government has shifted its official position over the Falklands. Menem has, on several occasions, vowed to recover the islands for Argentina before the year 2000. Rows could have broken out as each country claimed sovereignty over the Falkland waters and the right to levy oil royalties. Instead, the two countries have made an agreement under which both can cash in without abandoning their principles. Britain will continue to hold the Falklands, but Argentina will

be essential to the islands' long-term prosperity – not least for the siting of mainland oil installations to make exploration and extraction viable.

The long-term status of the Falklands remains in dispute. Even if military action by Argentina is no longer an option, Menem is bound to use every diplomatic trick available. He is playing a much longer game now to persuade and pressure the British or the Falkland Islanders that sovereignty should change. The visit of the Princess of Wales will provide him with an opportunity to enhance his credibility in the eyes of the Argentines, Falklanders and British.

It is perfectly legitimate for the Argentine government to pursue its sovereignty claims through legal and diplomatic means. But a member of the British Royal Family must not allow herself to be used and manipulated in the Argentine cause. Being a goodwill ambassador to a country with whom we were at war only 13 years ago requires diplomatic knowledge, skill, tact and political nous – as well as smiles and style.

The visit will be a severe test for Diana's political skills. She has next to no experience of the subtleties of the diplomatic world. On the other hand, she has proved herself to be a consummate operator in her battle with the Royal Family. This could be our chance to find out whether the skills she uses so effectively to promote and position herself can be employed on behalf of her country.

ANOTHER VIEW Sir Patrick Cormack

## Grand designs for Greenwich

The old order changes and buildings cannot remain immune, however hallowed they may be. All over the country there are churches that have been declared redundant and converted into concert halls and libraries and even homes. But when a public building of national importance can no longer be used for its intended purpose there is a national responsibility, vested in the Government, to ensure that any new use is entirely seamless.

This is a responsibility that has not been effectively discharged in the case of County Hall. As I look across from the House of Commons, I see one of the most notable buildings of the 20th century empty and forlorn. I would have kept it as the headquarters of much public life in a new incarnation. Some have talked of another great art gallery, or an expanded maritime museum, and others of a campus for a university. What is crucial is that the Chapel and the Painted Hall and the rest of Wren's grand design should have a truly national purpose and that the building should be a living one.

What about a public service college? That would be a splendid millennium project. Maybe we could even have classes for Members of Parliament!

and where Nelson lay in state before his burial, would be advertised in the pages of a glossy magazine – albeit that it was engendered as much public pride in a new incarnation. Some have talked of another great art gallery, or an expanded maritime museum, and others of a campus for a university. What is crucial is that the Chapel and the Painted Hall and the rest of Wren's grand design should have a truly national purpose and that the building should be a living one.

What about a public service college? That would be a splendid millennium project. Maybe we could even have classes for Members of Parliament!

The writer is Conservative MP for Staffordshire South.



Intruder being led away from Buckingham Palace

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### The right price to pay to visit the V&A

From Lord Armstrong of Ilminster

Sir: There is clearly some confusion about where the V&A stands on admission charges, following your report of 16 November ("V&A director wants £10 admission fee").

That report quoted, out of context, remarks made by Dr Alan Borg, the director of the V&A, in an interview for the *Antique Collector* given last July. In that interview he made clear his preference for either free entry or admission charges rather than voluntary donations, and expressed the view that many visitors could afford to pay £10 for entry to the V&A. But he also made it clear that, if the Board of Trustees was to decide to introduce admission charges, he would not recommend a charge of £10.

It would be for the Board of Trustees, when reviewing the V&A's financial situation and prospects, to take a decision as to whether to introduce admission charges at the V&A and, if so, at what level. It has no present plans to introduce admission charges.

Yours faithfully,  
ARMSTRONG OF ILMINSTER  
Chairman, Board of Trustees  
Victoria & Albert Museum  
London, SW7  
21 November

### Windsors with winning ways

From Mr Donald Cape

Sir: For once, I believe, you have got it wrong in your leader today ("The Windsors cannot win", 21 November). Around here, at least, there is pity for the ex-Sloane Ranger with a persecution mania and we are glad that she has found a role visiting the sick and fund-raising. But to suggest she is more in touch with, and has more support from, ordinary people than the Queen, or the Queen Mother, or the Prince of Wales with his fans among the inner-city young he meets through the Prince's Trust, or Princess Anne with the Save the Children, suggests to us that you are out of touch.

Yours,  
DONALD CAPE  
Guildford,  
Surrey  
21 November

### Broth? It's not so simple...

From Mrs Margaret Thompson

Sir: Christine Smith is right to point out the virtues of broth to people on benefit (letter, 16 November). However, as well as basic ingredients, there are other requirements: for instance, the know-how to make it, now that cookery is not taught in schools; access to a safe means of prolonged cooking, which is not available in bed and breakfast hostels; and the ability to discriminate between seductive food advertising and dietary advice. A huge change in dietary knowledge and habits has occurred, both in and out of the kitchen. The rise of pre-packed and prepared foods, emphasis on ease of preparation, and the death of small shops such as butchers have all contributed.

Perhaps a coherent food strategy, taking all these influences into account and sympathetic to the practical needs and culture of young mothers, would be of benefit to them and their children. Despite my efforts, my own small children have very definite food preferences that do not include broth!

Yours sincerely,  
MARGARET THOMPSON  
Chessington,  
Surrey  
17 November

compulsory charges for admission ("V&A director attacks 'silly' donations", 17 November).

This extraordinary remark does not hold well for the future of the V&A. I am afraid I must inform Dr Borg that affordability is a judgement that most of us ordinary mortals on ordinary incomes have to make every day of our lives, let alone when deciding whether we can afford to visit the V&A.

A further pronouncement by Dr Borg, in the *Antique Collector*, to the effect that a majority of visitors to the V&A could afford a £10 entrance fee reveals an ignorance almost amounting to contempt for what average earners can afford.

Over the past few years, the V&A has attracted a loyal and growing constituency of regular visitors, due in no small measure to the attraction of a voluntary payment system. Dr Borg has dismissed the system as "silly" and "uncomfortable" for visitors. From my personal experience, quite the opposite is the case. Affordable entry leads to satisfied customers and consistent cash flows that Dr Borg will ignore at his peril.

Yours faithfully,  
DAVID HARRIS  
London, W14

From Mr W. J. Rosengrave  
Sir: I am almost 80 years old now. When I was a young boy, I lived in Bow, in the East End of London. On some Saturdays, or during the school holidays, I could sometimes coax 2d or 3d from my mother and with it take a return ticket on the train from Bow to

### Drugs and crime

From Mr John Alderson

Sir: I am grateful to the press secretary of the Ministry of Defence (letter, 20 November) for pointing out that in his recent speech to the leaders of the armed forces, Michael Portillo did not refer to "inner-city crime" specifically, for I would not wish to misrepresent him.

I would only like to point out that, in the policeman's world, drug trafficking and inner-city crime are inextricably linked, and involvement in one is likely to lead to involvement in the other, as the Army would know from its experience in Northern Ireland.

Yours faithfully,  
JOHN ALDERSON  
Onery St Mary,  
Devon  
21 November

The writer was Chief Constable of Devon and Cornwall, 1973-82.

### Monstrous slur

From Ms Julie Burchill

Sir: I have never smoked a cigar in my life, let alone been asked to become a founder member of the Havana Club (David Lister's Diary, 21 November). Neither do I wear a monocle, drink from pint glasses or harass waitresses. Not all lesbians do, you know.

Sexist and stereotypical slurs on my sexual persona I can take. But if you once more suggest that I would enter a room, let alone join a club, which houses those twin monstrosities Michael Caine and Bryan Adams, I will sue you severely.

Yours,  
JULIE BURCHILL  
Brighton, Sussex  
21 November

### Ecstasy and Prozac: the facts

From Miss Magdalene Andrews

Sir: As a young person of 17, I feel I must reply to Nanette Bramwell (letter, 15 November) who states that it is not parents who need to be informed about drugs, but teenagers such as myself. She writes that the emotive appeal of Mr and Mrs Betts was lost on us because we do not, as a group, watch the news. But everybody I talked to in school had heard of their daughter Leah's tragedy and knew why it had happened. This kind of thing does not deter young people from taking drugs. They see, and rightly so, 50 deaths in five years, when millions take Ecstasy every week. It is less dangerous than crossing the road.

My peers know more about these drugs than the older generation could teach us. What parents do not realise is the extent to which drugs are taken.

A teacher at my school (he was also a parent) gave an assembly on how, at university, people may offer us "strange substances". He obviously did not realise that at least half the people he was addressing were habitual drug users and had been since they were 16.

We know all the names of different drugs, what they do, which ones you should not mix alcohol with, how much they cost and who to get them from, even if you don't take advantage of the information. Parents and other adults can have no authority over something they know nothing about.

Yours sincerely,  
MAGDALENE ANDREWS  
London, W7  
19 November

From Professor Hugh Freeman  
Sir: In his letter yesterday (21 November), Robin Prior claims

### Not in our league

From Mrs Caroline Beamish

Sir: I scan the school league tables, published today (21 November), with scepticism and irritation. I work as a teacher in the London borough of Southwark, albeit in the College of Further Education. I also run English classes for recently arrived refugees and asylum-seekers, aged 14-16, from Southwark secondary schools.

The Independent schools in the borough that achieve the top places in the league tables are under no obligation to educate these pupils, nor, as selective schools, do they have any obligation towards pupils with any kinds of special needs. The state schools take in all of them, and in Southwark they constitute quite a high proportion of all schoolchildren.

How can the performance and outcomes of the two types of school be compared?

Yours sincerely,  
CAROLINE BEAMISH  
London, SW9

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### Holy vegetables!

From Mr Jack Hale

Sir: God may have been an enthusiast as animal rights in the beginning, as Sister Millicent Olga suggests (Letters, 21 November), but He seems to have changed His mind fairly quickly. He is reported (Genesis 9, 3) to have told Noah that he could eat meat. Possibly He considered fruit and veg good enough for Adam, a gardener, but not substantial enough for Noah, a rough, tough sailor.

Yours faithfully,  
JACK HALE  
Cockhead,  
Tynes & Wear  
22 November

From Mr Bob Frost  
Sir: While God may, indeed, be a vegetarian in the early part of Genesis, it would appear to be merely a phase, as with so many other youngsters, that He was going through.

By Chapter 15, He is encouraging Abram to cut various animals in half, and by the time we get to Chapter 22, He has convinced Abram that he should tie up his son and place him on an altar for sacrifice.

Certainly if such behaviour was repeated today, one would look to prosecution of Abram by the RSPCA, both God and Abraham to be investigated for possible ritual abuse, and Isaac to be taken into care and to receive counselling after his horrific experience.

Yours sincerely,  
BOB FROST  
Deal, Kent



# Small Budget here, great debate elsewhere

Clarke's plans do matter, of course, but what happens in America and East Asia will affect us far more

It is nearly Budget time. If you were to believe the standard rhetoric of British politics it is also crunch time for this government: Kenneth Clarke has this one shot – only one because they cannot be sure they will make it to next November – to win the election. He needs to make, so the conventional wisdom runs, the appropriate judgement between the overall tax take and the Government's spending; he needs to deploy any tax cuts that he might be able to scratch together to best political advantage and cut spending to least political disadvantage; and he needs to frame a Budget which is favourably greeted by the financial markets, for that way he can also engineer an early cut in interest rates.

There is nothing wrong with this sort of analysis. Indeed, in the short-term it is the sensible way to see the exercise: as a series of political judgements, with the person making them having to balance conflicting objectives. The most obvious such balance is between taxation and public spending. But there is also the balance between different types of taxation (whom do you hit? whom do you help?) and between different types of public spending (in particular, cash benefits or public services?). And there is the less obvious balance between the level of public borrowing, the Public Sector Borrowing Requirement, and the likely profile of interest rates over the following year. The more the Government borrows the easier the tax/spending equation but, other things being equal, the higher the level of interest rates. Practical question: do voters want tax

cuts or would they prefer lower interest rates?

Well, we shall see the Tory perception of what voters want and, in so far as economics affect voting patterns, be able to see the Tory pitch for the next election. In the "new Labour" response to the Budget we will catch a glimpse of the alternative pitch, in particular how different this might be from the old Labour perception of the role of a government.

But this is all a bit unsatisfying, is it not? The differences are quite finely balanced: a few billions of extra spending and taxation; a bit more taken from one group of people and given to another – or maybe even given back to the same people in a different way; and a few billion more of borrowing and plus or minus half a percentage point on base rates.

It is unsatisfying because, as must be clear to anyone who travels about the world a bit or even reads the foreign pages of a newspaper, there are seismic changes taking place in the rest of the world which will affect our future prosperity far more than the odd penny off income tax. There is a grand debate taking place elsewhere about the very nature of government itself, against which our annual Budget is a side-show. What Mr Clarke does or does not do matters on an 18-month view, of course, but on a 5- or 10-year time horizon the tax and spending plans of our government will be much more affected by two other big forces now evident elsewhere. For one we look to America; for the other to East Asia.

The issue in America is the balanced budget. We regard it as normal that the



HAMISH MCRAE

government should have the right to borrow money; to spend money that it does not have in order, for example, to improve services ahead of an election, or simply to cut taxation. People huff and puff at this, and the financial markets exact a penalty in the form of higher interest rates on government debt. But nowhere is it seen as beyond the legitimate role of a government.

Nowhere yet. It is hard to judge at this stage quite how the great debate in the US on the budget will eventually unfold, but the fact remains that both parties there are committed to a balanced budget, and pressure from the Republicans was strong enough to force the US to the brink of default. The US in any case has a much smaller budget deficit (as a percentage of GDP) than any other large developed country and, looking ahead, has the further advantage of a population which is ageing more slowly too. This demographic point is important, for a deficit represents deferred taxation: a liability imposed by the present generation on its children. So quite aside from the practical issue of the need to finance a deficit, there is an ethical issue: what right does any one generation have to impose obligations on a future one? This sort of moral argument is

starting to be heard in the US, and is one of the big forces driving the case for some kind of binding commitment to a balanced budget. If the markets don't force the issue, so to speak, the moralists will.

The import of all this is obvious: if the US really does commit itself to a balanced budget the rest of the world will be driven to follow. A new standard for government behaviour will be established – or rather re-established, for 100 years ago it would be perfectly normal for governments to regard this as a tenet of wise financial management.

The second big idea comes from East Asia. Here the issue is not the right of governments to borrow, but rather the appropriate size of government itself.

Until a few years ago rich countries tended to have a high proportion of GDP allocated by government and considerable regulation of their economic activities. The models varied from country to country: the US and Japan had 30-35 per cent of GDP passing through the state but coupled this with strict regulations; Western European nations had up to 50, maybe a touch more, of the GDP passing through the tax mechanism, though in some ways at least they had fewer regulations than the US or Japan. There were no examples of rich countries where the state played only a minimalist role.

That has changed. New models are emerging in East Asia. For example, in Hong Kong the state plays a small role in economic life. Yet Hong Kong is rich (on some measures richer than Britain) and growing with astonishing rapidity. The wealth

shows. People are well fed and well educated, health care is good, and while housing remains very cramped by European and particularly North American standards, the general lifestyle of most people is in other respects similar to that of the other rich parts of the world.

Or take Singapore. There the model is rather different, with a very high degree of regulation of both personal behaviour and in some respects economic life. But in other respects the government stays out of economic activity; taxation and public spending are low.

As the East Asian region develops so that it rivals, and probably surpasses, North America and Europe in economic might, its values, its way of doing things, is bound to have greater global impact. One of the central differences is the balance of responsibility between on the one hand an individual and his or her family, and on the other the state. One measure of this is personal savings. As far as there is a common thread in East Asia, it is that it is a low-tax, high personal savings society. To say all this is not to assert that we have to adopt this pattern wholesale, for we do not. But expect to be influenced.

So, as the bluburb from our Budget fades next week, look for signs that politicians understand these great changes. Look for signals such as comment about the intergenerational impact of still-large deficits, or the need for greater personal savings. Some politicians know all this: Frank Field does; Chris Patten does; I suspect both John Major and Tony Blair do. Not too sure about Kenneth Clarke.

## Letters (with a lot of flannel)

From Arthur Tremain

Sir: In all the fuss surrounding the re-emergence of Beatlemania, I am surprised no one has mentioned the fanatical interest that the late John Lennon had in cricket.

It is little realised that he was an obsessive Lancashire supporter, and hated to tour during the summer for fear of missing a Lancashire game or a Test match. During concerts, he would often watch videos of the latest Lancashire game on what fans thought were loudspeakers but were in fact TV monitor screens. If you watch videos of his later concerts, you can sometimes see him jump in the air at moments apparently unconnected with the music. Usually this was because someone had just been called out.

During his later years with Yoko Ono, who showed a sad lack of interest in the game, he would sneak off to play cricket with the Manhattan Minstrels, a New York team of expatriate cricketers drawn partly from British showbiz exiles and partly from West Indian immigrants. I remember standing beside him in the slips one day and watching him put down a difficult left-hand chance. "No one would have got that," I said, to comfort him, "except maybe Paul McCartney."

"Why him?" said John. "Well, he's left-handed."

"Yes, but Linda McCartney would have got in the way," said John. How we all laughed.

However, the team abruptly lost John Lennon's services when Yoko Ono persuaded him to play naked one day as a protest for peace. He was never picked again.

Yours sincerely ...

From Mr Gary Burnip

Sir: In all the fuss about the anniversary of the Sun Page Three girls, I am surprised no one has mentioned the cricket team which these gallant girls ran for many years. United by a common love of the game – and a generous subsidy from Mr Murdoch – these fun-loving fillies often turned out of a Saturday to delight crowds all over the country with their skill as well as their stunning looks. Ignorant commentators have often supposed this buxom bunch played cricket topless, which shows a lamentable depth of ignorance and a degree of sexism on their part. In fact, these leggy lovelies preferred to play in French chambermaids' outfits with short black skirts and lacy cleavage.

Some of them were far from untalented. We had a fast bowler called Leslie Lindquist who could work up a fair head of steam, even though she was amply endowed in the chest region with a bust of more than 40in (or should that be in milligrams these days?).

On one occasion an opposing batsman asked her if she did not find it difficult to get her arm over with such a bountiful bosom. "Look, love," she snapped, "I don't ask if you have trouble walking or running, do I?" How we all laughed!

Yours faithfully ...

From Major-General Sir Norman Fishbol

Sir: May I put in a word in support of my good friend Nicholas Soames MP? In all this Prince of Wales controversy he has come in for a good deal of flak, with many people unable to decide if he is genuinely paranoid or merely shamelessly trying to play for people's sympathy. Well, let me tell you, there is no one straighter and finer than Nicholas Soames, not least when it comes to cricket, in which game he is one of the stoutest fielders known to man – no pun intended!

I remember when he was a spectator at a cricket match at



MILES KINGSTON

Windsor Castle, the annual fixture between Old Equeuries and the Prince of Wales's Valets Past and Present XI. One of the equeuries had to leave and Nicholas was pressed into being a substitute. "Blimey!" quipped one of the valets, as Nicholas strode on to the field. "They've sent on their 12th and 13th man!" How we all laughed.

Yours sincerely ...

From Professor Norman Curew

Sir: It would be a shame if Purcell's tercentenary were allowed to pass without some mention being made of the great composer's fondness for cricket.

I do not know if Purcell played cricket, but the musical world was stunned two years ago at the discovery of his cricketer cantata ("Bliss Pair of Stumps") and a collection of cricketering rounds to be sung at sporting parties. Purcell had a weakness for writing rounds with rather risqué words, and these cricketering ditties are no exception! I surprised a Wigmore Hall audience recently when, as an encore at a choral concert, I produced 11 men in white flannels who sang:

There was a very courtly lover,  
Who quoth, "I need no extra cover  
When with my mistress I do lay  
And with her fine legs I do play ..."

And so on through all the fielding positions. How we all laughed!

Yours faithfully ...

Five years on, the spirit of Margaret Thatcher can be detected in the conformism of the Major era

## The ghost in the Tory machine

Five years on and what of her spirit remains? On this day in 1990, Britain was waking up to read the text of Margaret Thatcher's resignation statement. The political world was digesting her extraordinary last performance in the Commons. Rival candidates were looking in the mirror and asking themselves in the cold morning light: am I man enough to succeed her?

Five years on, there is no monument to Baroness Thatcher. She herself lives on in London and in aeroplanes, an unquiet ghost, a presence rumoured, not seen or heard. She doesn't speak freely to her



ANDREW MARR  
Columnist of the Year

nation, but privately and for cash to conclaves of rich Americans. The woman who was once a political iconoclast, a radical force of world class, is reduced to the level of an exiled Stuart, restlessly travelling and remembering past glories. The memoirs and memorial television programmes have been made and sold. She gave up the Commons, barely functions in the House of Lords, has produced no works of polemic or political thought and gives hardly any interviews. Of other ex-prime ministers in modern times, Heath and Macmillan have had livelier retirements. But as a political player, Lady Thatcher herself, once the liveliest of all, is as dead, as long-gone, as Peel or Gladstone.

In one sense, this is admirable. The occasional outburst aside, she has left the field clear for her successor. In return, he has not repudiated her openly, as it once seemed that he might. When she went, some of the younger cabinet ministers rejoiced and compared themselves to the prisoners from *Fidelio*, marching into the light.

Yet no new dawn broke. It

was, to adapt Norman Lamont's phrase about the economy, a false dusk. On most of the key questions, the Major administration has turned out to be the post-Thatcher administration. She would have signed at Maastricht, too. In that odd little border town, with its Christmas lights and cobbles, she would have argued up to the line, then done the deal, as she always had. Since then, Major has adopted a "Europe of nations" rhetoric which is remarkably similar to Thatcher in her Bruges speech.

On the economy, it has been the same story. Taxes and spending rose during the recession; as a pragmatist, Thatcher would have let them rise too. She would have been in the ERM, expelled, and similarly cross. She would have spoken in similar terms at the Mansion House, talking of reducing the state's share of spending. She would have fought inflation, though perhaps less fiercely than John Major.

The last-generation privatisation attempts, whether abortive like the Post Office or rumbling on like rail, might or might not have been too far for her. She was wary of privatising all those little Queen's heads. But they are the sort of thing a Thatcher administration in 1995 might have been up to. Would she have lived up to her hot, morally impeccable, out-of-office words on Bosnia had she still been in Downing Street? An intriguing question, but an unanswerable one.

Had she stayed, it is not impossible that she would have won again in 1992. Most Tories assume that she would have lost, clinging to the poll tax as she sank. Many of her former lieutenants disagree. She would have tempered her style. There would have been no Christian Democrat breakaway over Europe, no CDP adventure to match the SDP in the Eighties.

A Thatcher government now would have been different, above all, in its people. Norman Lamont as Chancellor? Michael Howard as Foreign Secretary? Michael Heseltine, surely, restricted to a happy retirement with soccer in his arboretum, making speeches about Asia.

But in fact, had she gone on



and stayed in office, she probably wouldn't have been Prime Minister by now. We would have had a smoother succession – no, well, John Major. Five years on, had the Cabinet rallied to her on that dark winter evening, we might well have been living under a Major government carrying out Thatcher policies.

Which, of course, we are. There would have been more of a sense of forward movement, probably, and continuity, certainly, but the broad thrust of government policy would have been similar. The point about 1990 is not that the party foolishly changed course, but that it failed to seize its opportunity to do so.

For Thatcher radicalism was a strictly limited project. It was about hacking back some familiar rivals to Westminster and Downing Street – the trade unions, the federalist bureaucracy of the European Union, local government, and a few of the more irritating instances of the liberal establishment, such as the BBC. Financial deregulation and lower taxes were to unshackle the energies of the middle classes and the South. The rest was incidental.

The release of national energy that she accomplished, at considerable cost, between 1979 and, say, 1988, was not repeatable. Her rhetoric about the small state was matched by extreme political caution about preserving public services, particularly for the middle classes. There was no second wave of Thatcherite revolution available, because the next obvious areas for reform included the political establishment itself. She had done for Britain all that a centralist, politically conservative free-marketeer could. Had she gone on, she would have become, increasingly, the Prime Minister for the status quo.

It may seem, in retrospect, too fantastic to imagine a post-Thatcher Tory party that was prepared to think hard about the quango state, about the need to rebuild some stable system of local democracy, about Scotland (though we await Major's proposals later this month) about the House of Lords and about a positive agenda for European politics.

This is not what conservative parties are generally for. Yet it would have taken such a Tory conversion for the party to have changed the country in the Nineties as dramatically as it had in the Eighties.

Instead, we have been marking time as a country since she went.

I don't mean that nothing worthy of comment has happened. There have been useful bureaucratic reforms, bolder operations, both at home and abroad, and difficult exercises in parliamentary party management. There has been a noticeable slowing of the federalist

movement. Perhaps most significant of all, Labour, beaten yet again, has moved further to the centre and to pro-market positions than anyone would have dreamt possible a few years earlier. So things have changed.

But none of it has given us a stronger sense of our own future, or made us more self-confident and better prepared. We have grown older as a country, not younger. Because Margaret Thatcher was responsible for the last great era of change, it is easy to look back and think that her passing marked the passing of energy from politics.

I believe the opposite is true, that the Conservatives as rulers and the rest of us as ruled have suffered from her late legacy of political centralism and her unimaginative conformism about power and the British state. After her early years, she became ever more the political establishment and ever less the rebel. Her spirit has been influential, but instead of pointing to new challenges, provoking and exciting, it has been a dull, minority, governance presence. And she has said little to the country since she left, because she has had nothing striking to say.

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by Tony Reeve and Steve Way



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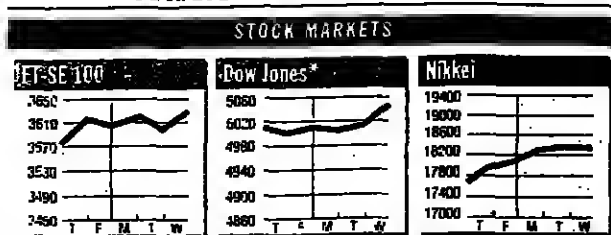
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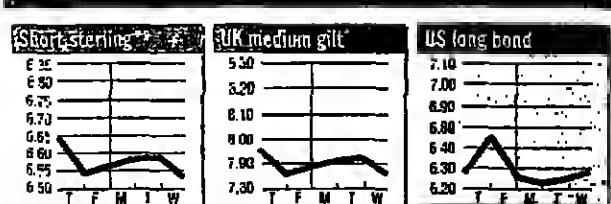
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FTSE 350	1801.40	+11.00	+0.7	1801.80	831.00	3.84
FT Small Cap 1992.56		+1.21	+0.1	1993.71	1678.81	3.55
FT All Share	1776.80	+10.87	+0.6	1776.97	1488.23	3.80
New York	5048.12	+24.57	+0.5	5048.12	4688.70	2.35
Tokyo	18238.84	+144.40	+0.8	18238.84	14488.41	0.89
Hong Kong	9501.01	+48.82	+0.5	10022.00	8246.00	4.10
Frankfurt	2733.25	+1.81	+0.1	2737.00	870.96	2.03
Paris	1875.47	+2.54	+0.1	2017.27	1700.58	3.18
Nikkei	9177.00	-5.00	-0.1	9917.00	8612.00	1.80

\*New lower index & graph at 1330 hours \*\*FTSE World Index Table

**MAIN PRICE CHANGES**

FT-SE 350 companies (excluding investment trusts)				Falls			
Rises							
	Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change		Price (p)	Change (p)	% Change
Fortis	3475	72.5	2.1	Vodafone	216	23	11.1
Savoy Hotel	1025	142	14.8	Granada	649	48	6.9
Courtaulds	399	39	10.8	Inchcape	255.5	12.5	4.7
CGW	456	37	8.1	Pilkington	193	5	2.6
Island Group	158	8	5.1	Telewest	191	5	3.0

**INTEREST RATES**



Index	1 Month	1 Year	Medium Term (%)	Long Term (%)	10 Year (%)
UK	6.75	6.50	7.75	8.42	8.43
US	5.88	5.56	5.86	7.82	7.85
Japan	0.50	0.34	2.77	6.67	7.85
Germany	3.94	3.81	6.34	7.37	7.06

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# Forte spurns Granada's £3.1bn opening shot in takeover battle

MATTHEW HORSMAN, JOHN SHEPHERD and DAVID HELLIER

A vicious and acrimonious takeover battle was sparked last night as Granada's audacious £3.1bn hostile bid for Forte was given short shrift by the board, which said that it "totally fails to recognise the value of the company".

That view was echoed in the City, where analysts said the offer was only an opening shot. "This is not a knock-out offer," said one leading leisure analyst. "The company is worth considerably more." Analysts said the chances of a counter offer to Granada's bid were remote.

The battle by two of the country's largest leisure companies promises to be drawn-out and acrimonious. At stake is control of Forte's 900 hotels - including Grosvenor House in London, the George V in Paris and the Ritz in Madrid - and its restaurants and motorway service stations.

Shares in Granada dropped 48p to 649p, while those in Forte rose to 347.5p yesterday, as the market weighed the details. The mixed shares and cash offer valued Forte at £3.4bn at the

start of trading yesterday, but that had dropped by £30m to £3.1bn by close of dealings.

If successful, the bid will push Granada's gearing to 130 per cent, and the credit agency IBCA put the company's long-term rating of A on watch, "with negative implications".

Granada, which runs two independent television companies, a rentals division for televisions, computers and other household equipment, and catering services, is offering four Granada shares plus £3.25 for every 15 Forte shares. There is also a full cash alternative of 321.7p a share.

Gerry Robinson, Granada's chairman-designate, said yesterday that Forte had been undermanaged and had returned poor value to shareholders. He vowed to restructure the company's sprawling hotels and catering operations, selling off £500m worth of assets and improving profit margins. "We've tracked this opportunity for several years," Mr Robinson said. "We believe we are financially and managerially ready for it."

However, Sir Rocco Forte said he was "very confident" of beating off the bid. "He [Gerry] is two years too late in making a bid. And he is two years too late in making the remarks he made about the company."

Mr Robinson said his company intended to sell off bits of the Forte empire if the bid succeeds. The 68 per cent, but restricted, voting stake in the luxury Savoy hotels group would be put up for sale. Also earmarked for disposal are the Lilywhites sporting wear retail operation and a few of Forte's "trophy" hotels.

It intends to rebrand the remaining hotels, concentrating on building the Meridian chain, which Forte bought last year, into its main international operation, probably by folding in the Forte Grand chain.



Bidding for glory: Granada executives Gerry Robinson (left) and Charles Allen Photograph: Kevin Lamarque/Reuters

Ultimately, Granada hopes to create two distinct hotel products at the higher and lower ends of the mid-market. Forte is the market leader in the fast-expanding budget hotel market through its Travelodge chain.

Also lined up for disposal are Forte's 22 motorway service sites, which Mr Robinson conceded would pose insurmountable competition hurdles. Granada operates 27 roadside service sites in the UK.

Granada has grown sharply in the past four years, with operating profits rising from £88m in 1991 to £388m this year. In the same period, Forte has seen profits tread water, drifting from £289m in 1991 to £258m this year and has had to cut dividend payments.

Full-year results released yesterday by Granada showed that pre-tax profits climbed 32 per cent to £351.2m, on turnover up 14 per cent to £2.4bn. The dividend total was lifted from 10p to 11.75p per share.

Mr Robinson rejected suggestions that the bid had been pitched too low. "The City always wants more," he said. "That's par for the course. We've put a good bid forward, and we will have to wait for three or four days to see whether we have a convincing case."

Analysts said yesterday that the offer might have to be raised to 400p a share, or nearly £3.9bn, to secure victory.

Mr Robinson also rejected criticism that there was no strategic fit between the two

companies. "People like to make these businesses complicated, which they are not. Hotels, like catering and television and any other business, are about unit management," he said. "We have proved that we can manage well."

There were suggestions yesterday that Granada did not necessarily have the management depth to run an international hotels company. One leisure analyst said: "This business requires not just an understanding of pricing and filling rooms but also a good understanding of the international market."

A spokesman for Forte said: "The logic of a fit between [Granada and Forte] does not seem to stack up too well."

However, others accepted that Mr Robinson, along with his chief operating officer Charles Allen, had the relevant experience, citing the improving fortunes at both Sutcliffe, the catering business bought two years ago, and at Pavilion, the motorway services company purchased in April.

At its current level, the offer would be worth £250m to the Forte family, which owns just under 8 per cent of the company. The family has a shareholding of around 75 million shares - between 7 and 8 per cent in the company - which are owned directly by Sir Rocco Forte, his sister Olga Polizzi, and their father, Lord Forte, and indirectly through a number of trusts.



Sir Rocco Forte: 'company is worth considerably more'

## Cost-cutting 'caterer' challenges ex-playboy

NIGEL COPE

Granada's hostile bid for Forte pitches two sharply contrasting businessmen into battle. In the Granada corner is Gerry Robinson. He is 47, the ninth of a Donegal carpenter's 10 children, who was once described by the comedian John Cleese as an "ignorant upstart caterer".

In the Forte corner is Sir Rocco Forte, the smooth, polished scion of the Forte dynasty, who speaks like Prince Charles and dresses in the best Savile Row suits. Known as a former playboy, he once squandered millions on women such as Bianca Jagger. Now 50, he is married to the equally glamorous Alia Rocco in 1986.

Their management styles are very different. Mr Robinson is a fervent believer in delegating and describes most work as a "waste of time". He works a strict nine-hour day and even takes Fridays off.

Sir Rocco regularly puts in a 12-hour stint in the office - in addition to business dinners.

"It's hard to be a playboy when you work as hard as I do," he said recently.

Mr Robinson has developed the reputation of a ruthless cost-cutter which has made him popular with City analysts. He frowns upon unnecessary expense and runs Granada from a unimpressive office block in London's Soho. The management structure is geared to speed up decisions. Managers are given responsibility and made accountable.

By contrast, Forte has a more remote style of management. At the London head office Sir Rocco only recently moved his office down from the penthouse suite to the same floor as the rest of the board. Decisions are said to be slow and the directors of the two main divisions - hotels and restaurants - do not even sit on the main board.

The HQ has four lifts and it is said that when a Forte family member is present one is reserved for their private use. In the City Sir Rocco has been criticised for combining the roles of

chairman and chief executive and running the company like a private family concern. "It is not seen as a dynamic business," one observer said.

Socially the two are poles apart. While Mr Robinson is a quiet family man, Sir Rocco's is a member of the upper crust social whirl. When he was knighted, congratulations poured in from royalty, Baroness Thatcher and half the current cabinet. Even his chauffeur has an MBE.

The background of both is fairly humble. Mr Robinson's family left Ireland when he was 11 and he initially studied to be a priest. But he left the seminary at 16 for a career in industry. In 1987 he led the management buy-out of Grand Metropolitan's catering division to form Compass. He was appointed head of Granada in 1991 when John Cleese made his "upstart caterer" remark.

Sir Rocco had a swifter ascent. After leaving Oxford he joined Trusthouse Forte in 1970, becoming deputy chief executive eight years later.

## Temperance trust could hold key

JOHN SHEPHERD

In theory, the outcome of the bid could be influenced by a small number of shares controlled by the Council of Forte, a trust set up in 1904 to "further temperance", and inherited by the Forte company when it merged with Trust Houses in 1970 to form Trusthouse Forte.

The trust owns only 780,000 shares, less than 0.1 per cent of the total 943 million Forte shares in issue, but has the right to the same number of votes as all the other shareholders put together.

However, it is by no means certain that the Panel for Takeovers and Mergers will allow the council to use its 50 per cent share of the votes in the takeover fight.

Granada is relying on the panel taking the same stance as it did in 1971 when the council's right to vote was neutralised during the failed bid by Allied Breweries for Forte. Judith Shepherd, a member of the panel executive, said yesterday that no decision had been reached yet. "We need to hear the views of Forte and the council."

The delicate power issue will, no doubt, be debated at length



Controlling interest: Trust members (clockwise from top left) Lord Boyd-Carpenter, the Duke of Marlborough, Lord Callaghan, Hugh Astor, Sir Paul Wright and Lord Peyton

by the council, which is headed by Hugh Astor, and is comprised of three lords, an earl, a duke and two knights of the realm.

If the council's vote is again declared null and void under Rule 10 of the Takeover Code, Granada's strategy will boil down to gaining control of more than 50 per cent of the shares held by other investors. In effect, ordinary shareholders would have a full vote per share rather than half a vote.

The council is free to declare

itself neutral ahead of any binding decision by the panel. One of the issues the council will have to take account of is the basic requirement for trustees to look after the best interests of the trust's beneficiaries.

The aim of the trust is to distribute income for charitable purposes. However, the amount of available, distributable dividend income from shares in Forte has dwindled in recent years and will be another main point to be considered when the council debates the bid.

## Reed's newspaper arm sold for £205m

MATTHEW HORSMAN Media Editor

The US buyout specialists Kohlberg Kravis Roberts and Co have bought the regional newspaper division of Reed Elsevier, the Anglo-Dutch publishing giant, for £205m.

The announcement capped two weeks of frantic negotiations involving as many as five bidders, and brought to £685m, after tax, the amount Reed has raised from selling-off the bulk of its consumer businesses.

KKR is expected to find buyers for some of the group's newspapers, and will be working with the current management, led by Reed Regional's chief executive, Jim Brown.

Clifton Robbins, a KKR executive, who has spent the past 10 days negotiating the deal, said yesterday that current management would get a meaningful chunk of equity. "The regional papers are doing quite well, and last year made record profits. Management is very bullish about the situation."

Last year, Reed Regional

had operating profits of £18m on turnover of £142m. KKR will pay £140m in cash, and issue an interest-bearing note for £65m, repayable by January 1997.

Pru Ventures, the venture capital arm of Prudential insurance, had been considered a frontrunner, but ruled itself out when the sellers decided to hold a "contract race", offering a deal to the first bidder able to complete negotiations.

The company also announced three transactions in the Netherlands and one in the US, and said that the divestment process, aimed at raising up to £1bn, "was nearly complete".

Dagbladen, the group's Dutch newspaper publishers, will be sold to PCM Uitgevers NV for £246m, while two smaller Dutch deals, along with last week's sale of the US consumer magazines to the media affiliate of KKR, will raise an additional £189m.

The sell-off, is aimed at repositioning the company as a publisher principally of business information. However, Reed Elsevier is keeping its PIC consumer magazine division.

## Speculation boosts C&W

DAVID HELLIER

Almost £300m was added to the value of Cable & Wireless yesterday as the shares jumped 37p to 466p on takeover speculation. At yesterday's closing price, the company is valued at slightly more than £10bn.

The speculation came in spite of a denial by Craig McCaw, the American billionaire, that he was gearing up to mount a bid. The City linked Mr McCaw with C&W before Tuesday's late news of the stock departure of both the company's chairman, Lord Young, and James Ross, chief executive.

Their departures followed two days of talks that failed to resolve the bitter power struggle between the two men. Yesterday, traders took the view that the resignations left the company vulnerable to a bid.

"The speculation is entirely predictable," Laurence Heyworth, telecoms analyst at Flemings, said. "However the speculation is rather more

predictable than the actual chance of a bid."

Analysts said that if the company wished to remain independent it would need to appoint a chief executive quickly who would provide a more defined strategy and thereby prevent a break-up.

On Tuesday, the group appointed Brian Smith non-executive chairman and said that a board committee under his chairmanship would be formed to select a new chief executive "as soon as possible".

"The Cable & Wireless board does not want the company to be carved up. They'll want a chief executive to see the good points of the so-called 'federation' and possibly express it a bit better," John Clark, of Daiwa Institute, said.

Analysts said the departures of Lord Young and James Ross yesterday were welcomed by the market but that Cable & Wireless remained vulnerable and open to a possible bid or a break-up.

### IN BRIEF

#### DTI clears TSB takeover

Lloyds Bank's shares rose 21.5p to 871p after its agreed bid for TSB was cleared on competition grounds. TSB also gained 7p to 414.5p. While the proposed deal still needs clearance by other regulators such as the Bank of England, the President of the Board of Trade, Ian Lang, "has decided on the information at present before him, and in accordance with the recommendation of the Director General of Fair Trading, not to refer the merger to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission under the provisions of the Fair Trading Act 1973". Bifa, the banking union, fears 1





Rocco may or may not be up to the fight but the old man, Charlie, is still alive and he is not going to see his life's work disappear without serious bloodshed

## Robinson may bite off more than he can chew

On the face of it, what we are about to witness with Granada's £3.1bn bid for Forte is a fight so unequal that it seems almost cruel. In the right hand corner is Gerry Robinson, an Irishman whose truculent laid back manner disguises an executive style as demanding as they come and a track record that amounts to one of the finest in British corporate life today. In the left hand corner is Sir Rocco Forte, second generation former playboy, there only because he is his father's son, and a track record, if Granada's devastating attack is to be believed, that is little short of disastrous. When the bid hit first thing yesterday morning, he was out phasing shooting. Poor Rocco.

Not everything is always as it seems, however, and as the City recovered from the excitement of the first punch, doubts began to creep in. Is this not mere empire building by Granada broadcast TV with equipment rental and motorway service stations might seem illogical enough as it is, without making it more confusing still by loading on Forte's property assets. Certainly there is a suspicion in the City that Mr Robinson may be biting off more than he can chew. Furthermore, say Rocco's supporters, paid and otherwise, he is indeed his father's son and will surprise us all with a street fighter's defence. Forte has famously fought off hostile boarders before and will do so again.

In the spirit of backing one side or the other, however, here is the case in favour of

Granada, which though it will clearly have to raise its offer a little, must remain odds-on favourite to win. The confusion in the City over strategy mainly results from the confusion at the heart of Forte himself, which likes to project itself as a top-of-the-range hotels group. Think Forte and you think the George V in Paris, the Cipriani in Venice and nowadays even the Savoy. In truth these businesses are about as relevant to Forte's core earners of roadside catering and mid market provincial hotels as a ten bob note, requiring almost totally different marketing and management skills.

Dispose of those bits and pieces, however, and you end up with a business which is highly relevant to Granada. Mr Robinson has been tracking Forte for three years or more and believes the fit as neat as that of hand and glove. The timing of this bid might be open to question, occurring apparently at the wrong point in the cycle with Forte recovering strongly. Even so, the opportunity for improvement still looks considerable. These are businesses the City has long suspected were badly run and controlled.

Gearing of 130 per cent, even after the planned disposals, seems high, but it is pursued as deliberate policy, for these are cash generative businesses being bid for. Mr Robinson has achieved the trick before of gearing up the company to unwind it later and deliver the value through to shareholders. Furthermore, the gearing sinks substantially when account is taken of

Granada's BSkyB stake, in the books at just £70m but worth £650m on the stock market.

Long term, you have to wonder whether conglomerates such as Granada make a great deal of corporate sense. Certainly the media interests, if this takeover goes through, will begin to look distinctly out of place. Demerger and breakup, however, is a long way in the future. Forte is just the sort of business Mr Robinson ought to be able to work miracles with. Even so, a bitter fight can be confidently predicted. Rocco may or may not be up to the fight but the old man, Charlie, is still alive and he is not going to see his life's work disappear without serious bloodshed.

### A difficult fit for Labour's new clothes

For much of this year, new Labour has been trying on the clothes of fiscal and monetary orthodoxy. The fit always looked tight, but now the contest appears to have burst as Gordon Brown tries to outdo Kenneth Clarke in the tax-cutting stakes.

The Shadow Chancellor didn't have much difficulty in exposing the Conservatives' sorry record in yesterday's debate on the economy. As he pointed out, even if Mr Clarke were to bring down income tax by 4p in the pound – costing some £7bn – that would still leave him a long way off the 7p in the pound by which taxes have been raised

this Parliament. Cuts on such a scale are out of the question in next week's budget, given government borrowing which is expected to run at about £30bn this year. Whatever tax rabbits Kenneth Clarke pulls out of the red box, he will have to justify them with spending cuts. And whatever he claims about slashing expenditure, the City will be sceptical – and rightly so.

The new Tory mantra intoned by Mr Clarke is that they alone can bring down public spending to below 40 per cent of GDP. What ministers omit to tell the public is that although now in their 17th year of office, they have only succeeded in that objective in just two years – and those were at the height of the giddily unsustainable boom of the late 1980s. How much easier to redefine public expenditure – as the Treasury did in June – with the effect of bringing down spending as a proportion of GDP by almost a full percentage point.

But if the Conservatives' difficulty in grappling with the hydra of public spending arouses legitimate scepticism, so too does New Labour's new penchant for cross-dressing in tax-cutting clothes. Gordon Brown had plenty to say earlier in the week about his desire to cut the starting rate of tax to 15 or even 10 per cent. He had nothing to say about the cost of doing so – a handy £7bn – and how that money would become available.

One danger for investors in this competition to cut taxes is that Labour will come

to power having stoked up unrealistic expectations and will end up being fiscally imprudent. Another is that Labour simply inherits the fiscal imprudence of an ultimately political budget. If nothing else, the fashion parade of political supermodels dressing in little other than tax-cutting pledges highlights the looming political uncertainties that seem set to overshadow markets in the months ahead.

### Expect the 'smoothies' to come out fighting

Accounting Standards Board chairman Sir David Tweedie has repeatedly made clear that if he stands for anything it is transparency in accounts. Few ASB proposals better fit in with that idea than today's attack on the "big bath", or lumping together of anticipated costs, and other techniques much loved by the likes of British Gas and Grand Met.

The plan is to allow companies to provide against profits only when they are committed to expenditure on reorganisation or to meet environmental liabilities rather than, as now, once the board has formed the intention. This looks logical enough. However, it represents such a radical change that Sir David fully expects the smoothies – or proponents of managing earnings by giving companies scope to manipulate the amounts and timing of provisions – to come out fighting.

**Power flotation:** Prospectus shows controversial payments to four grid directors to be supplemented by extra £91,000

## £408,000 dividend bonanza for National Grid directors

PETER RODGERS  
Business Editor

Executive directors of National Grid will receive a total of three extra dividends worth £408,000, it emerged yesterday in the prospectus for the flotation next month.

On top of a controversial special dividend of more than £300,000 that the Government tried unsuccessfully to persuade them to give up, four directors will receive a further £91,000. These payments come from a £63,000 dividend on a bonus share issue and £28,000 dividend as part of a rights issue, and are in addition to normal dividends of £26,000 on shares that they hold in the grid company.

The four directors, led by chairman David Jefferies, are sitting on shares worth £1.34m and potential option profits

worth at least another £400,000. This is on the basis of the 228p closing price yesterday on the Stock Exchange's "grey market" ahead of the flotation.

The company defended the additional dividends partly on the grounds that the directors are obliged to subscribe £63,000 of their own money to the rights issue if they are to maintain their holdings.

The prospectus also discloses that a fifth executive director, Roger Urwin, who has just joined as managing director for transmission from London Electricity, could earn just over £250,000 with pension and maximum bonus.

Mr Urwin has not been given any National Grid Group shares or options in his new post, although as a shareholder in London Electricity he was entitled to receive more

than £200,000 of grid shares as a result of the flotation. His total London and NGG packages this year are well over £1m, and he is to join a new performance-related bonus scheme to be set up by the grid.

Mr Urwin and another new director, Wob Gerretsen, are on two-year fixed contracts, which will become one-year rolling contracts when they expire. NGG rejected Labour criticisms that this broke the new Greenbury rules.

Furthermore, the directors will be given £156,000 worth of shares in the pumped storage business that has just been spun off from National Grid as a prelude to a trade sale. The company valued the pumped storage business at £450m. A spokesman said the shares for directors were to compensate for a fall in the value of their

holdings in National Grid as a result of the demerger.

The shadow Chancellor, Gordon Brown, called their total package "the biggest privatisation scandal so far" and accused the Government of riding roughshod over the proposals of the Greenbury Committee on executive pay.

National Grid announced profits 7 per cent higher at £330.7m on turnover 11 per cent higher at £706m, but disappointed the City with higher-than-expected start-up losses of £40m at Energis, the new telecoms subsidiary.

Yesterday, seven electricity company shareholders in NGG, with stakes of just over 50 per cent, announced the terms on which they would pass on their shares to their own shareholders. All holdings must be sold within a year.



Grid gainers: David Jefferies (left), additional £91,000 dividend, and Roger Urwin, package worth £250,000

## Clerical 'in bid talk' with GE

JOHN EISENHAMMER  
Financial Editor

Clerical Medical, the UK mutual life insurer, is believed to be in discussions with a potential bidder, possibly GE Capital of the United States. Analysts put a price of about £1bn on Clerical Medical, the eleventh largest life company in Britain in terms of worldwide premiums.

Clerical is one of many mutuals busy reviewing their future in the light of much tougher business conditions in the life market, and the resources needed to keep up with technological change. Last month, Norwich Union, one of the country's biggest mutual insurers, decided to convert to a public limited company, adding urgency to the argument among insurers and building societies about the importance of size and diversification.

Speculation about the suitors also centered on NatWest Group. Clerical Medical took a 7.5 per cent stake in NatWest Life when it was set up, and runs its administrative as well as some of its fund management operations. NatWest has met with only modest success in building up its life business, and the market believes it is interested in acquiring the expertise, systems and client list a mutual would provide.

Eric Hodson, finance director at Clerical Medical, said yesterday: "We are not in serious discussions at the present time with a third party."

GE Capital, the powerful financial services arm of General Electric, the American conglomerate, has publicly stated its intention of building up business in the UK. It has been linked to bid speculation surrounding Mercury Asset Management, Baring Asset Management and Gartmore.

Last week GE Capital announced that it is buying for £270m one of the US life insurance businesses put up for sale by Aon, a Chicago financial services group. Clerical would bring products, market experience and a fund on which GE Capital could build.

Clerical Medical traditionally sold life insurance through independent financial advisers, but recently built its own salaried sales force, with mixed results. A planned merger with NPL, another life company, collapsed three years ago.

Its free asset ratio, used by analysts as a rough guide to the strength of a life fund, is low compared to its larger rivals. The percentage of free assets to total assets at Clerical is estimated to be 4.7, compared with 13.7 at Standard Life, 12.3 at the Prudential and 7.6 at Norwich Union.

## Virgin TV challenge gets court go-ahead

MATTHEW HORSMAN  
Media Editor

In a landmark decision that sent shock waves through the broadcasting industry, the High Court yesterday gave Virgin TV leave to seek judicial review of the controversial Channel 5 award. The ruling will be a significant barrier to the Independent Television Commission, which last month awarded the 10-year licence to a consortium backed by the media companies Pearson and MAI.

Depending on how quickly the full hearing is completed, the legal challenge could delay introduction of the Channel 5 service, scheduled for 1997.

The High Court ruled that Virgin TV, backed by Richard Branson's Virgin Group, had an "arguable case" that the decision was flawed by illegality, irrationality and procedural impropriety.

The Virgin consortium claimed the ITC's decision had been irrational and wrong on several specific counts, including criticism of the group's own service, the number of independent programme suppliers it had lined up and its management structure. It also complained that the winning consortium, Pearson/MAI, had been allowed to change the terms of its bid after the applications were sent in.

Pearson had no comment last night. In the past, the com-

pany has said it had been asked to clarify its bid, and that there had been no alteration of its terms.

The ITC said last night it was "confident that it awarded the Channel 5 licence in a fair and proper manner."

Richard Branson has battled publicly in the past with ITC chairman George Russell, who is also chairman of Camelot, the national lottery operator. Mr Branson's out-for-profit bid for the lottery was rejected in favour of Camelot's offer.

Commenting on the High Court decision, Mr Branson said: "Perhaps the ITC chairman should now concentrate his efforts on his other role in life, that of chairman of Camelot."

Virgin TV's partners include Associated Newspapers and Paramount Television. Two other members, HTV – the Welsh ITV company – and Philips, the electronics giant, said yesterday they would sell their shares in the group to the remaining partners, raising speculation that they did not want to continue the legal challenge.

Virgin TV bid £22m for the licence, but both it and UKTV, the Canadian-backed consortium that offered the highest bid at £36m, were rejected on quality grounds. The winner, Channel 5 Broadcasting, bid exactly the same as Virgin TV. The ITC awarded the licence to the highest bidder it said passed the quality threshold.

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## Accused 'didn't care about pensioners'

JOHN WILLCOCK  
Financial Correspondent

The three accused in the Maxwell trial "didn't care" about the pensioners' interests when they pledged £22m worth of shares as security for a loan.

"All they cared about was saving the Maxwell empire, their position and their jobs," Alan Suckling QC, prosecuting, claimed on the second day of his final speech in the trial of Kevin Maxwell, his brother, Ian, and former Maxwell financial adviser Larry Trachteberg.

Mr Suckling described as "laughable" Kevin's evidence that he thought the shares in the Israeli company, Teva, belonged to the Robert Maxwell Group.

### The Maxwell Trial



Day 107

Kevin told the court that, in his last meeting with his father before his mysterious death at sea, the tycoon told him that the ownership of the shares had been transferred from Bish-opsate Investment Management, which administered the pension funds, to Robert Maxwell Group.

Mr Suckling alleged Kevin knew quite well the shares really belonged to the pension fund and that he had put them at risk as security for a loan in the days after his father's death.

By that time he knew the group was in a perilous financial state and "that there was at least the prospect of default and the shares being swallowed up and never coming back again must have been obvious".

Mr Suckling reminded the jury that, according to Kevin when he gave evidence, 14 witnesses from the Maxwell Group and from banks had not been telling the truth.

"There is a story of a proud mother watching her son at a Scout troop meeting and turn-

ing to her neighbour and saying, 'Look at that, my son is the only one in step'."

Mr Suckling asked the jury: "Is that the position here, or is the position you have not been told the truth by Kevin Maxwell? We suggest he has not told you the truth and that he knew, knew quite well, what he was doing and that it was dishonest."

The three accused deny co-conspiracy to defraud the pension funds by misusing the Teva shares and dishonestly putting them at risk.

Kevin alone denies a similar charge of conspiring with his late father to defraud the pension funds by misusing £100m worth of Sclerax shares.

The trial was adjourned until Friday.



## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

## Courtaulds defies roller-coaster

Courtaulds' half-year figures were the ultimate curate's egg, with two divisions much better than analysts' forecasts and one considerably worse. Profit forecasts were spot on as a result, but for all the wrong reasons, and changed expectations were reflected in a 10 per cent rise in the share price to 399p, reversing a dramatic slide ahead of the figures.

The market had been expecting a sharp fall from last year's pre-tax profits of £81m, thanks to the soaring cost of raw materials in the acrylics and viscose businesses, and the £68m reported was at the low end of expectations. Earnings per share slipped from 15p to 11.3p and the well-covered dividend rose only 3.6 per cent to 4.3p.

The extent of the downturn in the problem businesses reflected a massive rise in the price of acrylonitrile and wood pulp and resulted in a slump in profits from £42m to £2m.

But the City was pleasantly surprised by improved performances from coatings, sealants and polymers, where combined profits grew from £50m in the half to £60m.

It really is a wonder that Courtaulds made any profit at all from its fibres and chemicals division in the face of a jump in acrylonitrile prices from \$700 a tonne to \$1,800 and all the way back again within a year. Running any business in such volatile conditions is next to impossible, and BP Chemicals and other suppliers have done the industry no favours at all in pushing through such destabilising gyrations.

But the good news is that acrylonitrile is back at a sensible level and wood pulp has plainly peaked. It can take as much as six months for price changes to work their way through the manufacturing system, but certainly by the first half of next year things will be looking at least easier.

Other good news included buoyant sales of Courtaulds' new wonder-fibre, Tenax, a hit in Australia and Japan and set to make a major contribution to profits for the company in the long term.

The jump in Courtaulds' share price yesterday underlined the difficulty the market has in valuing a company whose profits are so dependent on the vagaries of commodity markets, the fate of which is increasingly being determined in the boom cities of southern China. Such is the buying power of the Chinese that overdoing it even slightly in Shenzhen can send world prices soaring.

Courtaulds is still a highly cyclical business, operating in relatively mature

industries and should be rated accordingly at a discount to the market. On the basis of forecast profits of £180m in the year to March 1997, the shares stand on a prospective price/earnings ratio of 14. High enough.

## FKI victim of its own success

New management brought in from BTR and GEC in 1992 to sort out the sprawling FKI engineering group has been as good as its word. Three years down the line, the business has been focused on a few commanding niches and the promised near-doubling of margins to over 10 per cent is on track for this year.

But FKI has become a victim of its own success. After more than tripling in three years, the shares have fallen steadily from a high of 248p in March last year on doubts the recent spectacular record can be maintained.

The strength of the group is confirmed by yesterday's half-time results, showing underlying profits 27 per

cent ahead at £39.4m in the six months to September, ignoring the £12.4m loss on disposals last year. An interim dividend raised 10 per cent to 2.2p reflects a similar rise in earnings.

With little help from volumes, the margin story has continued in three of FKI's four divisions, pushing the group return on sales from 9 to 10.3 per cent. The only dud in the half-year was the hardware division, whose Truth subsidiary dominates the US market for window stays and the like. The collapse in North American housing sales, notably in Canada, cut turnover and margins, leaving operating profits down from £20.8m to £15.5m.

The company is cautiously pointing to the start of an upturn, but it is early days yet and analysts were shaving forecasts for the group yesterday. Group profits of £85m would put the shares at 159.5p, up 4.5p, on a forward rating of 15.

More important to sentiment will be whether FKI can pull off another acquisition after raising expectations following its £137m cash call in June. The potential is enormous: Andura, the US lifting tackle group picked up in March, has seen margins more than double to nearly 11 per cent in just five

months of ownership. FKI was pointing the market towards action in the Far East yesterday, but nothing is expected this year. The shares are likely to remain in the doldrums until a deal emerges. Hold.

## Salvation lies in Meyer's hands

Meyer International seems to have run into every catastrophe imaginable this year. Its leading position in UK timber importing has failed to protect it from price falls of up to 20 per cent in softwoods since January, while the Jewsons chain of wood and builders merchants has been cruelly exposed to the moribund housing market.

On top of all this, PontMeyer, the group's mirror-image operation in Holland, has been hit by a 35 per cent drop in wood prices and a five-week builders' strike.

However, Meyer has been warning of the problems for the past year and the group has done well to hold the fall in half-year pre-tax profits to £7.3m, leaving £20.1m for the six months to September. With news that the interim dividend is being pegged at 4.2p, the shares responded with a 15p rise to 378p yesterday.

Meyer confirmed its September profits warning. Analysts are looking for something over £40m before exceptional £31m, putting the shares on a hefty forward p/e of 18.

But there are signs that management is at last realising that salvation lies in its own hands. Action at Jewsons has already improved margins from a low of 4.6 per cent in the second half of last year to 5.9 per cent. Now around £20m is to be spent over the next nine months to improve the branches, following on from the recent acquisition of 21 Builders' Mate outlets from Wickes. Meanwhile, stocks in the timber importing operation have been reduced to a 1.5-year low and Meyer's position strengthened with the acquisition of a similar business from Harisons & Crossfield.

The problem is these investments are being made against an unpromising background. There is little sign of any upturn in UK housing, and expectations of a recovery in timber prices early next year are more of a hope than a forecast. The shares look high enough for now.

## Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY

## An expensive day at the ball game



Shark-infested waters: Sean Connery in *The Hunt for Red October*, by baseball enthusiast Tom Clancy

Tom Clancy follows the example of our own Sting. He shows he has more money than he can keep his hands on by losing a fortune to a con man. The American author of *The Hunt for Red October* has been relieved of \$1.6m by an alleged fraudster he met at a baseball game.

US prosecutors claim that Richard Scott told the author that he could make his money earn 30 to 40 per cent by investing it in equities. So impressed was Mr Clancy that he took his new financial adviser straight home and wrote him a cheque for \$400,000 (as you do). The rest came later.

Mr Scott, the story goes, did not simply vanish with the money. No, he apparently invested it in some speculative funds with Paine Webber, with much the same effect.

The experience is bound to prompt yet another novel on Wall Street and global financial meltdown. Not that Mr Clancy is on his uppers. He has earned \$28m in the last two years.

Problems of a typically Ugandan nature appear to have blighted parts of the Forté empire. The hotelier has been forced to read the riot act to the management of Travelodge, the cheap and cheerful roadside inn operation, after a startling jump in the room occupancy rates.

When they hit 150 per cent it finally dawned on the Forté people that the beds were being used for something other than a good night's sleep.

Such hanky-panky will probably remain beneath the dignity of Sir Rocco Forte, the group's chairman, who started the day yesterday with the intention of shooting

pheasants. Thanks to the Granada bid he didn't get a shot off. But Granada's boss, Gerry Robinson, got a shot in of his own. "I get invited on pheasant shoots all the time," he says. "I just can't stand the idea of doing it."

Cold comfort for John Major in the viewing figures for the party conference season, which have just landed on BBC desks. Tragically for the Conservatives, the Prime Minister did not top the ratings. Come to that he did not even come second, or third, or fourth. No, Mr Major's keynote address in Blackpool on 13 October attracted only the fifth-largest audience.

Tony Blair's speech to the Labour party conference on 3 October topped the ratings with one million viewers. The

second-highest figure was achieved by Michael Heseltine on a breakfast phone-in the next day (discussing the Blair speech). The bronze medal also went to Mr Heseltine for his one-legged-man impersonation at the Tory conference and fourth place went to Brian Mawhinney.

That left Mr Major trailing in fifth with 700,000 viewers.

A display of cowardice worthy of the firing squad from the directors of the National Grid. In the process of briefing the City on the nuts and bolts of their business, the richly remunerated bright sparks have suddenly developed a yellow streak on the question of their salaries.

David Jones, group chief executive, and John Urtley, finance director, are happy to talk personally about electricity. But at the first mention of pay packets an interrogator is whipped off to another room and locked in with a PR man — all of which is a bit odd given that Mr Urtley at least is giving his £60,000 windfall to charity.

Pulses race at marathon Maxwell trial as Of Simpson's lawyer is spotted in the public gallery. Johnnie Cochran was invited to see how large-scale trials are handled over here by Smith Purnell, the company that provides a simultaneous computer transcript of the trial to the judge and barristers.

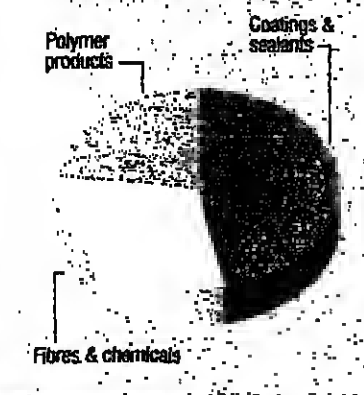
During his flying visit Mr Cochran managed to squeeze in a quick cup of coffee with the Maxwell judge, Lord Justice Phillips, during one of the murrain breaks. In camera, alas.

## Courtaulds: at a glance

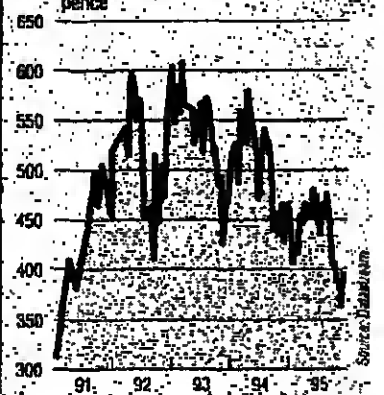
Market value: £7.62bn, share price 399p.

Five-Year record	1993	1994	1995	1996	1995
Turnover (£bn)	1.35	1.56	2.13	1.05	1.34
Pre-tax profits (£m)	186	122	151	81	68
Earnings per share (pence)	25.7	20.3	25.4	15.0	11.3
Dividends per share (pence)	14.0	14.8	15.4	11.5	4.3

## Operating profit by activity



## Share price



## A hammer to crack the work incentive nut

Gordon Brown's declared intention of reducing the starting rate of tax to 15 or even 10 per cent has generally been regarded in the City as an astute piece of political theatre designed to trump the tax card Kenneth Clarke is about to play. But the proposal could give Labour the perfect excuse to finance half the cost by a swipe at the corporate sector.

New Labour's fetching new pose as a low income tax party was intended to be provocative — and so it has turned out. An acrimonious war of words immediately broke out between Labour and the independent think-tank, the Institute for Fiscal Studies, over the relative merits of low tax bands and raising allowances.

Gordon Brown's contention was that a lower starting rate of income tax would be fairer than raising allowances. If combined with benefit changes, it would also be more effective in helping low earners and the unemployed off welfare.

If Labour were really serious about the fairness of the tax system, it would be pinning its colours to a cut in VAT, which is a much more effective way of

helping poorer households. It is a sign of the times that Gordon Brown feels compelled to fight the Tories on their own chosen ground of income tax. But is his proposal the fairest way to cut income tax?

The charts below compare two ways of spending £7bn on income tax reductions. The first pays for a cut in the starting rate from 20 to 10 per cent. The second pays for an increase in the tax-free allowance of £1,500, while adjusting the higher rate threshold of taxable income to ensure higher rate payers do not benefit disproportionately.

The charts show that there is little in it. Both are certainly much fairer than using the same pot of cash to make a cut of almost 4p in the basic rate. But if you had to choose the two in terms of equity, you would plump for cutting allowances, since every decile in the poorest 50 per cent of the population does somewhat better.

Labour's case is no stronger when it comes to the question of work incentives. Here, Gordon Brown's argument is that a 10 or 15 per cent starting band of tax would be more effective



## ECONOMIC VIEW

PAUL WALLACE

than lower allowances in moving people off welfare into work. If combined with cuts in the rates at which means-tested benefits are withdrawn as welfare recipients earn money.

At present, for example, family credit is withdrawn at 70p in the pound and housing benefit at 65p in the pound. Since these withdrawal rates, called tapers, are applied to post-tax income, they can have the effect of creating extraordinarily high marginal tax rates, leaving welfare recipients only 3p better off for every extra pound they earn.

So what would happen if these withdrawal rates were reduced by 10 percentage points, taking the taper for family credit down to 60 per cent and that for housing benefit down to 55 per cent?

A further analysis by the IFS showed that more unemployed households would find it more

worthwhile to work if this were combined with increased allowances rather than with a 10 per cent lower rate band.

For low earners, it is benefit withdrawal rates rather than income tax rates that matter. A similar reduction in the tapers under the present tax system

would leave welfare recipients with 7p in the pocket for an extra pound of earned income. If the cut in the tapers were combined with a new 10 per cent starting rate of income tax, they would end up all of 1p better off, with 8p in the pocket.

According to the Department of Social Security such reductions in the tapers would cost £500m. That's a lot of money, but only a fraction of the estimated £7bn it would cost to replace the 20 per cent tax band with a 10 per cent lower rate.

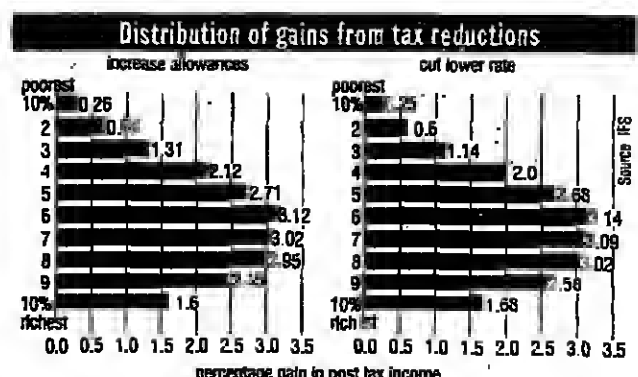
On any cost-benefit analysis, cutting the lower tax rate band is taking a hammer to crack the nut of work incentives.

Even so, there is one way in which Labour could find about half the money for such a change — by exploiting the new rates to clobber the corporate sector.

Consider the following sequence of events. In the 1992 Budget just before the election, Norman Lamont outsmarted the late John Smith by introducing the new 20 per cent band. A year later, tax-exempt pension funds got a very unwelcome Easter present — the reduction in their tax credit on advance corporation tax rate from 25 to 20 per cent.

A similar reduction in ACT from 20 to 10 per cent would raise almost £3bn, paying for almost half the new lower rate of income tax.

According to Paul Walton, equity analyst at Goldman Sachs, the effect of such a change on the market would be to slash share prices by 7 per cent. Now there's a political uncertainty for the market to brood on in a week in which it hit a new all-time high.



## IN BRIEF

## Management buyout at British Fuels

British Coal has sold its British Fuels businesses to a management buyout in a deal worth around £60m. The management, headed by David Port, hopes to take advantage of the deregulation of the gas market. Turnover was around £400m last year and the business employs more than 1,600.

## Miners sell out at Monktonhall

Waverley Mining is to buy the remaining shares of Monktonhall, the Edinburgh colliery taken over by its miners in 1992. Waverley took a 49 per cent stake last year and is now buying out the 15% miners who own the remainder. The deal values each miner's holding at £10,000, the amount each invested in the buy-out.

## Proudfoot trading 'better in second half'

Proudfoot, the management consultancy group, issued a trading statement yesterday in response to sharp falls in its share price. The shares slumped 6p to 19p, recovering to 24p by the close. Proudfoot said it knew no reason for the fall. Trading in the second half was better than in the first half, the company said.

## Wagon profits soar to £12.8m

Profits at Wagon Industrial, the storage products and retail systems group, increased by 33 per cent to £12.8m in the six months to September. Borrowings were down from £13.5m to £3.7m. Two business have been sold since the year for £6m.

## FDA warning dents Ferraris

A warning from the US Food and Drug Administration dented profits at Ferraris group, the international products and services company last year. The warning to the group's medical products division resulted in a four month ban on all exports of respiratory products to the USA. Profits fell from £1m to £648,000 in the year to August. The group reported strong order books and confirmed its commitment to medical hardware.

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## US staggering blamed for MAID volatility

TOM STEVENSON  
Deputy City Editor

The roller-coaster ride in MAID's shares continued yesterday after the business information group raised \$38.4m in a US share issue.

After opening at 269p, the shares jumped to 290p in early trading but closed 40p lower at 250p. Dealers blamed staggering by American investors, who picked up their shares at the equivalent of 242.2p.

Only a week ago, the shares touched 330p as investors piled into the stock on the back of a potentially lucrative tie-up with Microsoft and the prospect of a Nasdaq listing that would bring the company a stock market quotation in its biggest market and where high-tech stocks are enjoying a massive bull run.

Dan Wagner, chief executive, said: "We have been greatly encouraged by the strong share price performance since announcing our intended US public offering. This has enabled the financing to be secured at a higher price than initially anticipated while still satisfying our goal of greater share liquidity and resulting in lower dilution

for existing shareholders."

Shareholders who drove the price to its recent peak were badly wrong-footed by a Stock Exchange ruling that forbids a placing of shares at a discount of more than 10 per cent to the prevailing market price. Having announced that it would raise US funds at the equivalent of 240p, the placing could only go ahead if the shares fell to 265p, which they duly did.

MAID said it would continue with the US offer despite this because it thought the potential investor interest in America would mean it could raise more money than way, even at a big discount, than by a rights issue to existing shareholders.

The gyrations in MAID's shares in the past week are the latest chapter in a volatile existence on the market since flotation in March 1994, when an attempt to value a company making just £600,000 profits at £130m was greeted with scepticism. In the end talk of floating at 150p a share was resolved with a placing at 110p, valuing the company at £89m. The City was still not convinced and the shares drifted to a low of 43p in June 1994.

## Long-term carer in £45m housing deal

NIC CICUTTI

Westminster Health Care, one of the largest providers of long-term care facilities in the UK, announced yesterday that it is jointly buying Peverel, a private sheltered housing manager, for £45.8m.

The deal, with Holiday Retirement Corporation, a US firm offering similar services, involves both organisations paying £6.5m each in cash. The balance will be met by a £32.5m loan from Bank of Scotland.

Westminster's new joint venture comes as the insurance industry positions itself for a massive £5bn a year boom in sales of long-term care insurance in the wake of new government initiatives.

The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, is believed to be ready to announce in the Budget next week that he is to scrap means tests for elderly people who need long-term care but still have assets of more than £8,000.

In return, elderly people would be expected to take out insurance cover to fund the first three years of their care, whether residential or in their own homes.

0171 293 2312







[illegible]

STERLING		DOLLAR		Spot		
Country	1 month	3 months	1 month	3 months	Spot	
US	5993	14-2	33-30	10339	14-16	65-62
Canada	21306	5-17	21-18	14005	17-21	62-60
Germany	23661	5-45	27-28	14554	17-21	55-52
France	28831	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
Italy	28831	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
Spain	16274	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
Belgium	15867	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
Switzerland	15867	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
Japan	15867	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
South Africa	15867	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
India	15867	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
China	15867	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
SE Asia	15867	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
Latin America	15867	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
Europe	15867	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52
World	15867	66-84	34-37	14554	17-21	55-52

Country	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405</
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[illegible]

UK	6.7%	Germany	3.6%	Dis	8.7%	Discount
Bare		Discount	5.5%	Prime	8.2%	Belgium
France	4.0%	Lombard		Discount	5.4%	Discount
Intervention		Comptes		Fed Funds		Central
Italy	6.0%	Prime	7.5%	Signal		Switzerland
Discount	6.0%	Discount	8.2%	1-Day Repo	9.2%	Discount
Netherlands		Discount		Overnight		Lombard
Advances	3.6%	Discount	4.7%	Repo (Avg)	8.9%	

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Series	111/17	131/30		
December	138/38	105/55	74/75	61/11
January	161/51	130/70	100/61	77/11
February				84/11
March	176/64	147/64	117/106	

## Commodities

INDUSTRIAL METALS - London Metal Exchange		Volume	LINE SH
Plumet	Cash	3 milia	564236
		42536	

[illegible][illegible]

14-13	0207	1	152						
22-23	0207	1	152						
03-03	0207	1	152						
05-05	0207	1	152						
07-07	0207	1	152						
09-09	0207	1	152						
11-11	0207	1	152						
13-13	0207	1	152						
15-15	0207	1	152						
17-17	0207	1	152						
19-19	0207	1	152						
21-21	0207	1	152						
23-23	0207	1	152						
25-25	0207	1	152						
27-27	0207	1	152						
29-29	0207	1	152						
31-31	0207	1	152						
33-33	0207	1	152						
35-35	0207	1	152						
37-37	0207	1	152						
39-39	0207	1	152						
41-41	0207	1	152						
43-43	0207	1	152						
45-45	0207	1	152						
47-47	0207	1	152						
49-49	0207	1	152						
51-51	0207	1	152						
53-53	0207	1	152						
55-55	0207	1	152						
57-57	0207	1	152						
59-59	0207	1	152						
61-61	0207	1	152						
63-63	0207	1	152						
65-65	0207	1	152						
67-67	0207	1	152						
69-69	0207	1	152						
71-71	0207	1	152						
73-73	0207	1	152						
75-75	0207	1	152						
77-77	0207	1	152						
79-79	0207	1	152						
81-81	0207	1	152						
83-83	0207	1	152						
85-85	0207	1	152						
87-87	0207	1	152						
89-89	0207	1	152						
91-91	0207	1	152						
93-93	0207	1	152						
95-95	0207	1	152						
97-97	0207	1	152						
99-99	0207	1	152						
101-101	0207	1	152						
103-103	0207	1	152						
105-105	0207	1	152						
107-107	0207	1	152						

Age 1st	22.15	22.22	22.54	Vol	27,203	Index	16.71	Vol	14,313	Vol	14,313
Age 2nd	23.40	23.47	23.79	Source: CRB							
Age 3rd	24.65	24.72	25.04	Note: Age 1st column shows average for last 10 years.							
Age 4th	25.90	25.97	26.29								
Age 5th	27.15	27.22	27.54								
Age 6th	28.40	28.47	28.79								
Age 7th	29.65	29.72	30.04								
Age 8th	30.90	30.97	31.29								
Age 9th	32.15	32.22	32.54								
Age 10th	33.40	33.47	33.79								
Age 11th	34.65	34.72	35.04								
Age 12th	35.90	35.97	36.29								
Age 13th	37.15	37.22	37.54								
Age 14th	38.40	38.47	38.79								
Age 15th	39.65	39.72	40.04								
Age 16th	40.90	40.97	41.29								
Age 17th	42.15	42.22	42.54								
Age 18th	43.40	43.47	43.79								
Age 19th	44.65	44.72	45.04								
Age 20th	45.90	45.97	46.29								
Age 21st	47.15	47.22	47.54								
Age 22nd	48.40	48.47	48.79								
Age 23rd	49.65	49.72	50.04								
Age 24th	50.90	50.97	51.29								
Age 25th	52.15	52.22	52.54								
Age 26th	53.40	53.47	53.79								
Age 27th	54.65	54.72	55.04								
Age 28th	55.90	55.97	56.29								
Age 29th	57.15	57.22	57.54								
Age 30th	58.40	58.47	58.79								
Age 31st	59.65	59.72	60.04								
Age 32nd	60.90	60.97	61.29								
Age 33rd	62.15	62.22	62.54								
Age 34th	63.40	63.47	63.79								
Age 35th	64.65	64.72	65.04								
Age 36th	65.90	65.97	66.29								
Age 37th	67.15	67.22	67.54								
Age 38th	68.40	68.47	68.79								

100 Largest Insurance Firms		1994		1993		1992		1991		1990		1989		1988		1987		1986		1985		1984		1983		1982		1981		1980		1979		1978		1977		1976		1975		1974		1973		1972		1971		1970		1969		1968		1967		1966		1965		1964		1963		1962		1961		1960		1959		1958		1957		1956		1955		1954		1953		1952		1951		1950		1949		1948		1947		1946		1945		1944		1943		1942		1941		1940		1939		1938		1937		1936		1935		1934		1933		1932		1931		1930		1929		1928		1927		1926		1925		1924		1923		1922		1921		1920		1919		1918		1917		1916		1915		1914		1913		1912		1911		1910		1909		1908		1907		1906		1905		1904		1903		1902		1901		1900		1899		1898		1897		1896		1895		1894		1893		1892		1891		1890		1889		1888		1887		1886		1885		1884		1883		1882		1881		1880		1879		1878		1877		1876		1875		1874		1873		1872		1871		1870		1869		1868		1867		1866		1865		1864		1863		1862		1861		1860		1859		1858		1857		1856		1855		1854		1853		1852		1851		1850		1849		1848		1847		1846		1845		1844		1843		1842		1841		1840		1839		1838		1837		1836		1835		1834		1833		1832		1831		1830		1829		1828		1827		1826		1825		1824		1823		1822		1821		1820		1819		1818		1817		1816		1815		1814		1813		1812		1811		1810		1809		1808		1807		1806		1805		1804		1803		1802		1801		1800		1799		1798		1797		1796		1795		1794		1793		1792		1791		1790		1789		1788		1787		1786		1785		1784		1783		1782		1781		1780		1779		1778		1777		1776		1775		1774		1773		1772		1771		1770		1769		1768		1767		1766		1765		1764		1763		1762		1761		1760		1759		1758		1757		1756		1755		1754		1753		1752		1751		1750		1749		1748		1747		1746		1745		1744		1743		1742		1741		1740		1739		1738		1737		1736		1735		1734		1733		1732		1731		1730		1729		1728		1727		1726		1725		1724		1723		1722		1721		1720		1719		1718		1717		1716		1715		1714		1713		1712		1711		1710		1709		1708		1707		1706		1705		1704		1703		1702		1701		1700		1699		1698		1697		1696		1695		1694		1693		1692		1691		1690		1689		1688		1687		1686		1685		1684		1683		1682	
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[illegible]

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$67,896</b>	<b>\$67,896</b>
<b>UNIT TRUST GUIDE</b>		
as dividend		
out charge when units sold		
formerly holder		

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[illegible]

Open	
Interest	
10422	
17685	
42222	
73822	
88577	
10	
626222	
12085	
7382	
5311	
10485	
6982	
3208	
22937	

Cost/Unit	
Total/Units	
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chg	
+	325
+	600
+	2135
+	4550
+	456
+	30
+	8520
± change in hours	
in November	
Σ	
37567	24048
67763	56580
365281	297650
Source: Smith & Bar	

Cereals/bakery	
4-10	3476
11-20	3500
21-30	3525
31-40	3550
41-50	3575
average of 1228 items	
FLU/NOG	950
NOG/NOG	780
FLU/NOG	950
NOG/NOG	915
FLU/NOG	950
category/flowers	
10-15	(20/2000)
16-20	100-200
21-25	100-125
26-30	125-150
31-35	150-175
36-40	175-200
41-45	200-225
46-50	225-250
51-55	250-275
56-60	275-300
61-65	300-325
66-70	325-350
71-75	350-375
76-80	375-400
81-85	400-425
86-90	425-450
91-95	450-475
96-100	475-500
101-105	500-525
106-110	525-550
111-115	550-575
116-120	575-600
121-125	600-625
126-130	625-650
131-135	650-675
136-140	675-700
141-145	700-725
146-150	725-750
151-155	750-775
156-160	775-800
161-165	800-825
166-170	825-850
171-175	850-875
176-180	875-900
181-185	900-925
186-190	925-950
191-195	950-975
196-200	975-1000
201-205	1000-1025
206-210	1025-1050
211-215	1050-1075
216-220	1075-1100
221-225	1100-1125
226-230	1125-1150
231-235	1150-1175
236-240	1175-1200
241-245	1200-1225
246-250	1225-1250
251-255	1250-1275
256-260	1275-1300
261-265	1300-1325
266-270	1325-1350
271-275	1350-1375
276-280	1375-1400
281-285	1400-1425
286-290	1425-1450
291-295	1450-1475
296-300	1475-1500
301-305	1500-1525
306-310	1525-1550
311-315	1550-1575
316-320	1575-1600
321-325	1600-1625
326-330	1625-1650
331-335	1650-1675
336-340	1675-1700
341-345	1700-1725
346-350	1725-1750
351-355	1750-1775
356-360	1775-1800
361-365	1800-1825
366-370	1825-1850
371-375	1850-1875
376-380	1875-1900
381-385	1900-1925
386-390	1925-1950
391-395	1950-1975
396-400	1975-2000
401-405	2000-2025
406-410	2025-2050
411-415	2050-2075
416-420	2075-2100
421-425	2100-2125
426-430	2125-2150
431-435	2150-2175
436-440	2175-2200
441-445	2200-2225
446-450	2225-2250
451-455	2250-2275
456-460	2275-2300
461-465	2300-2325
466-470	2325-2350
471-475	2350-2375
476-480	2375-2400
481-485	2400-2425
486-490	2425-2450
491-495	2450-2475
496-500	2475-2500
501-505	2500-2525
506-510	2525-2550
511-515	2550-2575
516-520	2575-2600
521-525	2600-2625
526-530	2625-2650
531-535	2650-2675
536-540	2675-2700
541-545	2700-2725
546-550	2725-2750
551-555	2750-2775
556-560	2775-2800

and	2523	2625
discharged	2524	2626
and	2627	2627
discharged	2628	2628
and	2629	2629
discharged	2630	2630
and	2631	2631
discharged	2632	2632
and	2633	2633
discharged	2634	2634
and	2635	2635
discharged	2636	2636
and	2637	2637
discharged	2638	2638
and	2639	2639
discharged	2640	2640
and	2641	2641
discharged	2642	2642
and	2643	2643
discharged	2644	2644
and	2645	2645
discharged	2646	2646
and	2647	2647
discharged	2648	2648
and	2649	2649
discharged	2650	2650
and	2651	2651
discharged	2652	2652
and	2653	2653
discharged	2654	2654
and	2655	2655
discharged	2656	2656
and	2657	2657
discharged	2658	2658
and	2659	2659
discharged	2660	2660
and	2661	2661
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## sport

# We cannot be sure how pay-per-view would take shape here but football could be way off the mark in considering its potential

At an advanced stage in this line of work it is essential to reject the pre-tentious notion of having seen and done it all before and that nothing can come along to startle toilers of long experience.

What I have in mind is information received from New York yesterday concerning response to the contest Mike Tyson undertook against Peter McNeely in Las Vegas in August upon his return to the ring after three years imprisonment.

Even allowing for the portents of renewed violence raised by Tyson's comeback, an astonishing fact is that the fight claimed 26 per cent - \$96m (£62m) - of the total gross revenue generated in the US until then this year by pay-per-view television, and 48 per cent of all returns in boxing.

Two conclusions can be reached. One that Tyson is, irrefutably, the biggest drawing card in sport; the other that pay-per-view transmissions are not necessarily the bullion-pilers people connected with British sport, especially football, appear to imagine.

A few years ago, thoughts about pay-per-view occupied most of a long conversation I had in New York with an old acquaintance, Bobby Goodman, when he was director of boxing at Madison Square Garden. "What many fail to realise about pay-per-view is that you can just as easily show a loss as turn a profit," he said. "That applies as much to every form of entertainment - pop concerts, professional wrestling - as it does to

boxing. If the subscribers hack off you are in deep trouble."

On the understanding that British viewers will eventually have to pay for selected entertainment how many recent sports events would have persuaded them to place an order? Doubtless, had it been available, Tyson versus McNeely, Eric Cantona's return from suspension. Because of national fascination, probably a few matches in the Premiership. Frank Bruno versus Oliver McCull. Maybe some games from the European competitions.

As we cannot be sure how pay-per-view would take shape here there is not much point in speculation, but football in particular could be way off the mark in considering



KEN JONES

its potential. Apart from any other consideration, there is a geographical problem. What appeals in Manchester, Liverpool and Newcastle does not necessarily excite interest in London.

If things were in place, which of

course they won't be, you could probably sell Frank Bruno's defence of the World Boxing Council championship, scheduled for 16 March next year in Las Vegas, without trying.

The projected gross viewing figure for three possible Tyson fights next year rises to 56 per cent of the total pay-per-view returns from boxing. Of those who bought the bout against McNeely, 39 per cent were new viewers. Some social significance is drawn from the fact that 65 per cent were white.

Above all else, those figures emphasise the extent of world-wide fascination with Tyson. The confident conclusion of Tyson's pay-per-view promoters, Showtime, is that if he had not pulled out of the contest

against Buster Mathis Jr on 4 November that was going out free on the Fox network, their main rivals, Home Box Office would have taken a beating with Riddick Bowe versus Evander Holyfield on the same night. As it was HBO reached 550,000 homes, bringing in around \$21m.

Assuming that the New Jersey Gaming Board can be persuaded not to raise objections on the grounds of Don King's indictment in their state for insurance fraud, Tyson will finally get around to fighting Mathis on 16 December in Atlantic City.

It will be promoted by Donald Trump in alliance with a consortium of Atlantic City casinos and go out on Fox, who were thought to have

put up more than \$10m for the original date.

The sort of money involved has long since taken heavyweight boxing beyond any normal fiscal considerations in sport. "If Tyson's comeback goes according to plan, his earnings second time around could rise way beyond \$100m," a representative of Showtime said this week.

When prominent in helping Sugar Ray Leonard to surpass \$100m in ring earnings, the Washington lawyer, Mike Traynor, forecast that the advance of pay-per-view television ensured that a similar figure would eventually come the way of a fighter from one contest. It didn't take much to work out that he had Tyson in mind.

## McRae in control of his destiny

**Derick Allsop** reflects on an ability to tame his wilder streak that made all the difference for the world rally champion

They will tell you Colin McRae was born to rally, but no one is born to win and in rallying, especially, Britain has spawned worthy competitors rather than champions. Until Colin McRae.

He has elevated himself above the rest, not only because of his natural devastating pace but because he had the nous to channel that talent. The wayside is littered with the broken ambitions of the mercurial. Winners are made of sterner, more consistent stuff.

McRae's father, Jimmy, was an outstanding rally driver. He won the British championship five times and he recognised in Colin, at a very early age, the extra dimension of a potential champion. Others, like Malcolm Wilson, were less convinced.

Wilson had served his time as Britain's "latest hope", only to stumble in the wake of the Scandinavians and Flints, and then the charismatic Spaniard Carlos Sainz. Wilson, according to seasoned observers, lacked the added commitment and concentration required to harness his gifts. Mistakes at critical moments cost rallies and championships.

McRae, according to Wilson, also lacked the consistency to beat the best over the marathon course of a world championship season. He, too, made mistakes at critical moments.

"But I think Colin has

matured and found that difference," Wilson now says. "He's learned how to judge a rally and judge a championship. No one doubted his speed. That's always been obvious. But the real champions know when to use their speed and when to settle for points rather than take unnecessary risks."

McRae's pace these past four days has been too much for Sainz and the rest, and after losing almost two minutes with a puncture in Kielder he had to draw on that most fundamental of qualities. But it was always controlled, always assured, and, to Sainz's dismay, always irresistible.

Sainz had to accept that and ultimately his heart was broken. The Scot extended his lead on the final day with the flourish of a champion. He is not only Britain's first world rally champion, but at 31 the youngest.

Around the time of the inaugural world rally championship, in 1979, Colin McRae began satisfying his curiosity in motor sport on a motor bike. He began winning motocross races and the seeds of an obsession were sown.

He moved to four wheels in 1986 and his progress was again swift. Come his third season he was enjoying major success in British and Scottish competitions. In 1990 he was runner-up in the British Open championship and in each of the



No longer the nearly man: Colin McRae on his way to becoming the youngest world champion yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

following two years he was British champion.

His advance remained a family affair. Mother and father were usually out there in the forests, proffering advice and support. A younger brother, Alistair, would also build a rallying career, and another son, Stuart, played his part as caterer.

By now, however, Colin was

making his presence felt on the world scene. He led the RAC rally in 1992 and 1993, but each time had to retire after crashes. Another worthy Brit, another nearly man, or so it seemed.

At last year's Network Q RAC rally, McRae took the lead again and stayed the course. He was the first British winner of the event since Roger Clark in

1976. His next objective was the world championship. Despite problems early in the season, victory in New Zealand revived his aspirations.

Wilson believes the significant rally in McRae's season was the Australian, where he resisted any urge to reach out for an improbable win and settled for second place. "That was the turning

point," Wilson suggests. It certainly convinced me he was ready for the championship. He is now not only the quickest out there, he is the complete driver."

McRae acknowledges that transformation. "I've even calmed down away from rallying," said McRae, who has long sought recreation in adventurous and even wild pursuits such

as extreme skiing and water skiing. "I'm not as crazy as I was."

He already has a pad in Monte Carlo and further wealth will doubtless come his way. Some things, though, do not change. Like his taste for a "good bash". Last night he abandoned his Subaru Impreza with only one intention: to have the highest party of all time.

## Italian official banned for life

**Athletics**  
MIKE ROWBOTTOM

An official has been banned for life and two others have been disciplined by the Italian federation for irregularities which caused a world-record long jump by Ivan Pedroso to be invalidated.

The Cuban jumped 8.96 metres in Sestriere on 29 July, with the wind assistance apparently inside the legal limit at 1.2 metres per second. But, to Cuban fury, the Italian federation refused to submit the mark for ratification after film showed an official - Luciano Gemello - standing in front of the wind gauge during the jump.

Gemello, a former pole vaulter, was banned for life and two other judges, Paolo Guglielmi and Denis Morino, were suspended for three years.

Of 60 jumps in the long jump and triple jump events at the high-altitude meeting, only four were registered as within the legal wind speed limit, and three of those were Pedroso's. Federation sources said technical reports using a wind tunnel data had estimated the true speed at between three and five metres per second.

Officials said that the case would be referred to a formal trial to the International Amateur Athletic Federation council, and that the record of 8.95m, set by the American Mike Powell in Tokyo in 1991, would stand.

The Italian federation won praise from several Italian newspapers for the findings of the inquiry, though not for the investigation's speed.

## Ramprakash facing stiff competition from Crawley

## Cricket

**MARTIN JOHNSON**  
reports from Bloemfontein

It is now one month and five days since England arrived in South Africa, and the sense of achievement is a touch short of overwhelming. If time really does fly when you are having fun, then England, mentally at any rate, are still in the Heathrow departure lounge.

Washed out in the opening Test match, and with little meaningful match practice behind them, England filled their time yesterday with about three hours of fielding practice (the nets were waterlogged), about 30 seconds taking off a list of interesting things to do on a grey afternoon in Bloemfontein, and the rest

of the day waiting for bedtime.

Today, weather permitting, they find themselves with a medical condition almost unknown in modern professional cricketers - desperate for a game. Or in this case (the need to keep everyone involved having prompted them to alter the fourth day of the match against Orange Free State into a separate 50-over bash) two games.

The loss to the weather of three consecutive Test match days, thought to be unique in South Africa, means that England will not be thinking too much about altering their side for next week's second Test in Johannesburg, particularly as their bowlers have yet to send down a single delivery in the series.

However, the problematical No 3 batting position is again

under scrutiny after Mark Ramprakash's failure in Pretoria, and while Raymond Illingworth is a man of many virtues, patience is not thought to be among them. In which case, the long-standing tradition of giving a player at least two chances may not necessarily apply here.

John Crawley, like Ramprakash, has not exactly seized the chances that have come his way, but he has had fewer of them, and there are also grounds for suspecting that, of the two of them, Crawley might just have the greater big match temperament.

Ramprakash arguably has more talent than any batsman currently playing English cricket, but he averages less than 18 in the same number of Test matches, and while he has been unfairly

treated in terms of continuity, not even Australia are prepared to wait indefinitely for a fruit to ripen. Runs for Crawley in Bloemfontein may, therefore, be bad news for Ramprakash.

There are, though, two different arguments over Crawley's temperament. He came in to join Mike Atherton in the Sydney Test last winter with England, having lost the opening two matches of the series, in another dire mess at 20 for 3, and made 72 in a life-saving 174 partnership.

On the other hand, having been initially passed over last summer for the likes of Ramprakash and Jason Gallian, Crawley was recalled for the final two Tests against the West Indies, and twice lost his off stump offering no stroke to Courtney Walsh.

Crawley, having followed the

same path as Atherton through Manchester Grammar School, Cambridge and Lancashire, was not so long ago touted as Atherton's natural successor as England captain, but he probably only made this tour on a split decision in selection.

His urge to succeed, though, is no less than the hyper-dedicated Ramprakash. Since being identified in Australia as only slightly more mobile in the field than a sumo wrestler, Crawley has shed almost three stones in weight (largely on a coffee and fags diet) and has worked hard to extend his range of shot beyond the on-side bias which made him a comparatively easy batsman for a top class attack to the down.

Illingworth would ideally like to play only five specialist bats-

men in this series, with Jack Russell at No 6, which would leave no place for either Ramprakash or Crawley. However, as Ily cannot yet quite bring himself to trust his top five to make enough runs, Bloemfontein is a pivotal match for both of them.

The next three days may also go some way towards deciding whether Devon Malcolm's role on this tour will eventually extend to something more meaningful than the team mascot. South African cricket officials are hoping for Malcolm to become an inspirational role model for young blacks, but so far you can almost hear the young blacks saying: "We already know how to pour drinks for white people, so maybe we'll stick to soccer."

There may be something for

Malcolm in the Springbok Park pitch, which is generally good for batting but also rewards the quicker bowlers with a bit of bounce, and Allan Donald - who is not playing here - has dented more than a few helmets on his home ground.

First of all, though, the electrical storms having followed the England team here from Johannesburg, the tourists need some harder evidence that Nelson Mandela re-named South Africa the Rainbow Nation for its newly enlightened politics rather than the fact that he spends most of his time wading around in galoshes.

England vs Orange Free State, Bloemfontein three-day game starting today and ending Friday. England: M A Atherton (capt), A J Stewart, M R Ramprakash, S P Thomas, R A Smith, J P Crawley, D G Cook, J J Morris, M C Ross, R R Illingworth, D E Malcott.

## William Hill award won by Feinstein

**Sports books**

This year's William Hill Sports Book of the Year was won by the American author John Feinstein for *A Good Walk Spoiled* which is published by Little, Brown.

It is the first time in the seven years of the award that a book about golf has won. Feinstein wins £5,000, plus a free £500 bet, for his book about the inside world of the American golf circuit.

**GOLF BOOKS SHORTLISTED:** *Let's Get Forward* by Gary Nelson (Headline), *The Far Corner* by Henry Pearson (Little, Brown), *Ball by Howard Wright (Orion), The Prizefighters by Arlene Serfaty (Orion)* and *Out of Bounds* by Lauren St John (Transworld).

## Cyclops has company as machine moves to replace net cord judge

That endangered species, the net cord judge, may soon be removed from the line of fire and replaced by technology. At Wimbledon and elsewhere there would be no more gitting or teeth and hoping not to be belted in the ear by a stray shot or knocked asunder by a careering player.

A sensor system developed in Germany has successfully completed a series of trials at tournaments on the men's international circuit, starting with the grass-court event in Halle in June and culminating at last week's ATP Tour Championship in Frankfurt.

Alan Mills, the Wimbledon referee, declared the system to have "worked beautifully" when officiating at the Eurocard Open in Essen recently. Small sensors are placed at each end of the net and a

**John Roberts** on the latest step in the march of tennis technology

cable is fitted to a hand control operated by the umpire, who presses a button when the server tosses the ball and releases it after the ball has crossed the net. A beep sounds if the ball touches the net cord. Devised and manufactured by the Brauer brothers, who moved from east Germany to the Black Forest region, the machine has been fostered for the past two years by their compatriot Rudi Berger, one of the world's leading umpires.

The system is called Trinity. Berger explained, because of the three parties it was designed to help: "The umpire,



No job protection: net cord judges are on their way out

the players, and somebody else who sits at the net and gets hurt."

Monitoring a net cord can be a high-risk pastime, especially when serves timed at up to 137mph induce reflex returns of

a similar velocity. Helmets were used at the United States Open last year, but obtaining the need for a person to put his or her neck on the line is a preferred option.

This absence of a human

presence at the net has raised not the slightest protest from the players during the experiments conducted so far. "When the machine beeps the ball has not touched the net cord," Berger said. "They don't raise their hands to show that the ball was at least a foot above the net, like they used to."

Wimbledon and the three other Grand Slam tournaments are showing a keen interest in Trinity, which could become as commonplace as Cyclops, the "magic eye" service-line machine invented 15 years ago by a Briton, Bill Carlton.

Cyclops, while prone to phantom beeps if the control button is pressed at the wrong moment, has prevailed, although John McEnroe once said to an umpire, "I don't want

to sound paranoid, but that machine knows who I am." Berger emphasised that Trinity's beep is not as loud as Cyclops's and that the tone is different. "We wouldn't want any similarity. The players might become very upset if they heard a sound which reminded them that they had just served a fault."

Not all technological innovations have proved successful. TEL, an electronic line-calling system, was abandoned on the eve of the 1993 United States Open after metal objects caused the device to beep. Player pressure persuaded officials to revise their original plan to use a skeleton crew of only three judges with an umpire and the four wire-corded instead of the customary 10. One of the trinity would have monitored service net cords.

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## SPORT

WHY THIS MAN'S HELMET WILL NOT SAVE HIM FROM EXTINCTION  
John Roberts on the latest tennis technology

Page 30

# RAC RALLY: Scot masters the tracks of North Wales to pull away from Spanish rival and become Britain's first world champion

## McRae's mastery makes history

DERICK ALLSOP  
reports from Chester

Colin McRae held his nerve and his ground through the most important stages of his career yesterday and then cruised into Chester to take his place in sporting history – as Britain's first world rally champion.

The final, tense examinations of the Network Q RAC Rally, through North Wales, were negotiated with the assurance that had distinguished McRae from the rest and, in particular, from his Subaru team-mate, Carlos Sainz, the one man who stood between the 27-year-old Scot and the title.

McRae completed his mission in the manner of a champion: fast, decisive, imperious:

he extended his lead to the last, eventually reaching here 36 seconds clear of the Spaniard. He won 17 of the 28 stages, struggling off the handicap of a puncture that cost him almost two minutes on the second day.

Having achieved the breakthrough of winning the RAC 12 months ago, the first British winner for 18 years, McRae was favourite to repeat that feat this week. This time, however, the championship, the ultimate landmark, depended on the outcome. Expectation and pressure were heaped on his shoulders. He had conceded the previous rally, in Spain, to Sainz on team orders and arrived here level on points with his stable-mate but behind on wins.

He had to beat Sainz and had to finish. There was no margin

for error. McRae met the challenge with unflinching self-belief, making light of the daunting forest stages, the mist and the mud, and gradually wearing down what remained of Sainz's resolve.

All Sainz could do was maintain his own pace in the hope that McRae would overstretch and come to grief. Early in his career he might have done so, but not now. McRae, the authentic champion, has arrived.

After stepping from his car at the victory ramp at Chester racecourse, McRae said: "This has been our goal and it's a great day not only for me but the whole team. This has made it all worthwhile."

I was able to keep up my speed and I was always quite confident. In some rallies you just click, and this is one of them for me. I've been quickest here for four years. Two minutes in a world championship is a lifetime but I wouldn't let it beat me.

"Now we've done it, we've got to look ahead. Maybe it will be even easier next year, because you become more confident and I'll certainly be as hungry to win it again."

"Hopefully this will raise the stature of rallying in this country, as championships have in other sports. I believe rallying is on a par with Formula One and the attention of media coverage should be on the same level as Formula One."

Sainz, twice winner of the championship, looked like a

man who had been dragged through the forests of Britain for four days. In a sense, he had been. "All season it has been difficult for me, especially after injuring my shoulder in a mountain-bike accident and having to miss a rally. All I could do was try my best and think perhaps Colin would make a mistake," he said. "But he got a little luck and to win you always need that. He drove a superb rally. We tried to the last stage, but I always knew it was going to be difficult here."

David Richards, head of the Subaru operation, and the man who decided Sainz had to win the Catalunya Rally for "commercial reasons," might have felt relief as much as elation. He said he did not, but admitted:

"I'm happy for many reasons, and that has to be part of it. But I don't want to dwell on that. You couldn't have written the script better for us or Colin. This is his first championship, but by the looks of it I'd say it won't be his last."

Colin was quite clearly taking risks and Carlos knew one mistake could hand it to him but in the end it is a very special day for Britain."

McRae, having regained the lead in Tuesday's final stage, resumed his course yesterday morning with utter conviction. A 17-second advantage became 38 in four more leaps of the North Wales tracks and the contest was effectively over. Subaru's manufacturers' championship triumph was completed with Richard Burns third place and Alister McRae

gave the family a little more to be proud of with fourth place in his Ford Escort.

Both McRaes prepared themselves for a appropriate celebration. Colin had already discussed in his car with co-driver Derek Ringer, the matter of who would be paying.

McRae added: "One thing I do know, it's going to be the biggest party of all time."

McRae's victory in the RAC Rally (Chester) Final standings: 1. C McRae (Subaru) 2. C Sainz (Subaru) 3. R Burns (Subaru) 4. A McRae (Ford) 5. D Richards (Subaru) 6. D Richards (Subaru) 7. R Burns (Subaru) 8. A McRae (Ford) 9. D Richards (Subaru) 10. D Richards (Subaru) 11. D Richards (Subaru) 12. D Richards (Subaru) 13. D Richards (Subaru) 14. D Richards (Subaru) 15. D Richards (Subaru) 16. D Richards (Subaru) 17. D Richards (Subaru) 18. D Richards (Subaru) 19. D Richards (Subaru) 20. D Richards (Subaru) 21. D Richards (Subaru) 22. D Richards (Subaru) 23. D Richards (Subaru) 24. D Richards (Subaru) 25. D Richards (Subaru) 26. D Richards (Subaru) 27. D Richards (Subaru) 28. D Richards (Subaru) 29. D Richards (Subaru) 30. D Richards (Subaru) 31. D Richards (Subaru) 32. D Richards (Subaru) 33. D Richards (Subaru) 34. D Richards (Subaru) 35. D Richards (Subaru) 36. D Richards (Subaru) 37. D Richards (Subaru) 38. D Richards (Subaru) 39. D Richards (Subaru) 40. D Richards (Subaru) 41. 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